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BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

DR. JOHN LORD'S

BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

A series of lectures setting forth the great epochs and master minds of civilization,—a biographical history of the world's life.

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BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

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AUTHOR OF "THE OLD ROMAN WORLD," "MODERN EUROPE," ETC., ETC.

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LXXIII.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

THE AMERICAN IDEA.

AMERICAN STATESMEN.

LXXIII.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

THE AMERICAN IDEA.

IN a survey of American Institutions there seem to be three fundamental principles on which they are based: first, that all men are naturally equal in rights; second, that a people cannot be taxed without their own consent; and third, that they may delegate their power of self-government to representatives chosen by themselves.

The remote origin of these principles it is difficult to trace. Some suppose that they are innate, appealing to consciousness, — concerning which there can be no dispute or argument. Others suppose that they exist only so far as men can assert and use them, whether granted by rulers or seized by society. Some find that they arose among our Teutonic ancestors in their German forests, while still others go back to

Jewish, Grecian, and Roman history for their origin. Wherever they originated, their practical enforcement has been a slow and unequal growth among various peoples, and it is always the evident result of an evolution, or development of civilization.

In the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson asserts that "all men are created equal," and that among their indisputable rights are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Nobody disputes this; and yet, looking critically into the matter, it seems strange that, despite Jefferson's own strong anti-slavery sentiments, his associates should have excluded the colored race from the common benefits of humanity, unless the negroes in their plantations were not men at all, only things or chattels. The American people went through a great war and spent thousands of millions of dollars to maintain the indissoluble union of their States; but the events of that war and the civil reconstruction forced the demonstration that African slaves have the same inalienable rights for recognition before the law as the free descendants of the English and the Dutch. The statement of the Declaration has been formally made good; and yet, whence came it?

If we go back to the New Testament, the great Charter of Christendom, in search of rights, we are much puzzled to find them definitely declared any-

where; but we find, instead, duties enjoined with great clearness and made universally binding. It is only by a series of deductions, especially from Saint Paul's epistles, that we infer the right of Christian liberty, with no other check than conscience, — the being made free by the gospel of Christ, emancipated from superstition and tyrannies of opinion; yet Paul says not a word about the manumission of slaves, as a right to which they are justly entitled, any more than he urges rebellion against a constituted civil government because it is a despotism. The burden of his political injunctions is submission to authority, exhortations to patience under the load of evils and tribulations which so many have to bear without hope of relief.

In the earlier Jewish jurisprudence we find laws in relation to property which recognize natural justice as clearly as does the jurisprudence of Rome; but revolt and rebellion against bad rulers or kings, although apt to take place, were nowhere enjoined, unless royal command should militate against the sovereignty of God, — the only ultimate authority. By the Hebrew writers, bad rulers are viewed as a misfortune to the people ruled, which they must learn to bear, hoping for better times, trusting in Providence for relief, rather than trying to remove by violence. It is He who raises up deliverers in His good time, to reign in

justice and equity. If anything can be learned from the Hebrew Scriptures in reference to rights, it is the injunction to obey God rather than man, in matters where conscience is concerned; and this again merges into duty, but is susceptible of vast applications to conduct as controlled by individual opinion.

Under Roman rule native rights fare no better. Paul could appeal from Jewish tyrants to Cæsar in accordance with his rights as a Roman citizen; but his Roman citizenship had nothing to do with any inborn rights as a man. Paul could appeal to Cæsar as a Roman citizen. For what? For protection, for the enjoyment of certain legal privileges which the Empire had conferred upon Roman citizenship, not for any rights which he could claim as a human being. If the Roman laws recognized any rights, it was those which the State had given, not those which are innate and inalienable, and which the State could not justly take away. I apprehend that even in the Greek and Roman republics no civil rights could be claimed except those conferred upon men as citizens rather than as human beings. Slaves certainly had no rights, and they composed half the population of the old Roman world. Rights were derived from decrees or laws, not from human consciousness.

Where then did Jefferson get his ideas as to the equal rights to which men were born? Doubtless

from the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, especially from Rousseau, who, despite his shortcomings as a man, was one of the most original thinkers that his century produced, and one of the most influential in shaping the opinions of civilized Europe. In his "Contrat Social" Rousseau appealed to consciousness, rather than to authorities or the laws of nations. He took his stand on the principles of eternal justice in all he wrote as to civil liberties, and hence he kindled an immense enthusiasm for liberty as an inalienable right.

But Rousseau came from Switzerland, where the passion for personal independence was greater than in any other part of Europe, — a passion perhaps inherited from the old Teutonic nations in their forests, on which Tacitus dilates, next to their veneration for woman the most interesting trait among the Germanic barbarians. No Eastern nation, except the ancient Persians, had these traits. The law of liberty is an Occidental rather than an Oriental peculiarity, and arose among the Aryans in their European settlements. Moreover, Rousseau lived in a city where John Calvin had taught the principles of religious liberty which afterwards took root in Holland, England, Scotland, and France, and created the Puritans and Huguenots. The central idea of Calvinism is the right to worship God according to the dictates of con-

science, enlightened by the Bible. Rousseau was no Calvinist, but the principles of religious and civil liberty are so closely connected that he may have caught their spirit at Geneva, in spite of his hideous immorality and his cynical unbelief. Yet even Calvin's magnificent career in defence of the right of conscience to rebel against authority, which laid the solid foundation of theology and church discipline on which Protestantism was built up, arrived at such a pitch of arbitrary autocracy as to show that, if liberty be "human" and "native," authority is no less so.

Whether, then, liberty is a privilege granted to a few, or a right to which all people are justly entitled, it is bootless to discuss; but its development among civilized nations is a worthy object of historical inquiry.

A late writer, Douglas Campbell, with some plausibility and considerable learning, traces to the Dutch republic most that is valuable in American institutions, such as town-meetings, representative government, restriction of taxation by the people, free schools, toleration of religious worship, and equal laws. No doubt the influence of Holland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in stimulating free inquiry, religious toleration, and self-government, as well as learning, commerce, manufactures, and the arts, was considerable, not only on the Puritan settlers of New

England, but perhaps on England itself. No doubt the English Puritans who fled to Holland during the persecutions of Archbishop Laud learned much from a people whose religious oracle was Calvin, and whose great hero was William the Silent. Mr. Motley, in the most brilliant and perhaps the most learned history ever written by an American, has made a revelation of a nation heretofore supposed to be dull, money-loving, and uninteresting. Too high praise cannot be given to those brave and industrious people who redeemed their morasses from the sea, who grew rich and powerful without the natural advantages of soil and climate, who fought for eighty years against the whole power of Spain, who nobly secured their independence against overwhelming forces, who increased steadily in population and wealth when obliged to open their dikes upon their cultivated fields, who established universities and institutions of learning when almost driven to despair, and who became the richest people in Europe, whitening the ocean with their ships, establishing banks and colonies, creating a new style of painting, and teaching immortal lessons in government when they occupied a country but little larger than Wales. Civilization is as proud of such a country as Holland as of Greece itself.

With all this, I still believe that it is to England

we must go for the origin of what we are most proud of in our institutions, much as the Dutch have taught us for which we ought to be grateful, and much as we may owe to French sceptics and Swiss religionists. This belief is confirmed by a book I have just read by Hannis Taylor on the "Origin and Growth of the English Constitution." It is not an artistic history, by any means, but one in which the author has brought out the recent investigations of Edward Freeman, John Richard Green, Bishop Stubbs, Professor Gneist of Berlin, and others, who with consummate learning have gone to the roots of things, — some of whom, indeed, are dry writers, regardless of style, disdainful of any thing but facts, which they have treated with true scholastic minuteness. It appears from these historians, as quoted by Taylor, and from other authorities to which the earlier writers on English history had no access, that the germs of our free institutions existed among the Anglo-Saxons, and were developed to a considerable extent among their Norman conquerors in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when barons extorted charters from kings in their necessities, and when the common people of Saxon origin secured valuable rights and liberties, which they afterwards lost under the Tudor and Stuart princes. I need not go into a detail of these. It is certain that in the reign of Edward I.

(1274–1307), himself a most accomplished and liberal civil ruler, the English House of Commons had become very powerful, and had secured in Parliament the right of originating money bills, and the control of every form of taxation, — on the principle that the people could not be taxed without their own consent. To this principle kings gave their assent, reluctantly indeed, and made use of all their statecraft to avoid compliance with it, in spite of their charters and their royal oaths. But it was a political idea which held possession of the minds of the people from the reign of Edward I. to that of Henry IV. During this period all citizens had the right of suffrage in their boroughs and towns, in the election of certain magistrates. They were indeed mostly controlled by the lord of the manor and by the parish priest, but liberty was not utterly extinguished in England, even by Norman kings and nobles; it existed to a greater degree than in any continental State out of Italy. It cannot be doubted that there was a constitutional government in England as early as in the time of Edward I., and that the power of kings was even then checked by parliamentary laws.

In Freeman's "Norman Conquest," it appears that the old English town, or borough, is purely of Teutonic origin. In this, local self-government is distinctly recognized, although it subsequently was controlled

by the parish priest and the lord of the manor under the influence of the papacy and feudalism; in other words, the ancient jurisdiction of the tun-mōt - or town-meeting — survived in the parish vestry and the manorial court. The guild system, according to Kendall, had its origin in England at a very early date, and a great influence was exercised on popular liberty by the meetings of the various guilds, composed, as they were, of small freemen. The guild law became the law of the town, with the right to elect its magistrates. "The old reeve or bailiff was supplanted by mayor and aldermen, and the practice of sending the reeve and four men as the representatives of the township to the shire-moot widened into the practice of sending four discreet men as representatives of the county to confer with the king in his great council touching the affairs of the kingdom." "In 1376," says Taylor, "the Commons, intent upon correcting the evil practices of the sheriff, petitioned that the knights of the shire might be chosen by common election of the better folk of the shires, and not nominated by the sheriff; and Edward III. assented to the request."

I will not dwell further on the origin and maintenance of free institutions in England while Continental States were oppressed by all the miseries of royalty and feudalism. But beyond all the charters and

laws which modern criticism had raked out from buried or forgotten records, there is something in the character of the English yeoman which even better explains what is most noticeable in the settlement of the American Colonies, especially in New England. The restless passion for personal independence, the patience, the energy, the enterprise, even the narrowness and bigotry which marked the English middle classes in all the crises of their history, stand out in bold relief in the character of the New England settlers. All their traits are not interesting, but they are English, and represent the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxons, rather than of the Normans. In England, they produced a Latimer rather than a Cranmer, — a Cromwell rather than a Stanley. The Saxon yeomanry at the time of Chaucer were not aristocratic, but democratic. They had an intense hatred of Norman arrogance and aggression. Their home life was dull, but virtuous. They cared but little for the sports of the chase, compared with the love which the Norman aristocracy always had for such pleasures. It was among them that two hundred years later the reformed doctrines of Calvin took the deepest hold, since these were indissolubly blended with civil liberty. There was something in the blood of the English Puritans which fitted them to be the settlers of a new country, independent of cravings for

religious liberty. In their new homes in the cheerless climate of New England we see traits which did not characterize the Dutch settlers of New York; we find no patroons, no ambition to be great landed proprietors, no desire to live like country squires, as in Virginia. They were more restless and enterprising than their Dutch neighbors, and with greater public spirit in dangers. They loved the discussion of abstract questions which it was difficult to settle. They produced a greater number of orators and speculative divines in proportion to their wealth and number than the Dutch, who were phlegmatic and fond of ease and comfort, and did not like to be disturbed by the discussion of novelties. They had more of the spirit of progress than the colonists of New York. There was a quiet growth among them of those ideas which favored political independence, while also there was more intolerance, both social and religious. They burned witches and persecuted the Quakers. They kept Sunday with more rigor than the Dutch, and were less fond of social festivities. They were not so genial and frank in their social gatherings, although fonder of excitement.

Among all the new settlers, however, both English and Dutch, we see one element in common, — devotion to the cause of liberty and hatred of oppression and wrong, learned from the weavers of Ghent as well as from the burghers of Exeter and Bristol.

In another respect the Dutch and English resembled each other: they were equally fond of the sea, and of commercial adventures, and hence were noted fishermen as well as thrifty merchants. And they equally respected learning, and gave to all their children the rudiments of education. At the time the great Puritan movement began, the English were chiefly agriculturists and the Dutch were merchants and manufacturers. Wool was exported from England to purchase the cloth into which it was woven. There were sixty thousand weavers in Ghent alone, and the towns and cities of Flanders and Holland were richer and more beautiful than those of England.

It will be remembered that New York (Nieuw Amsterdam) was settled by the Dutch in 1613, and Jamestown, Virginia, by the Elizabethan colonies in 1607. So that both of these colonies antedated the coming of the Pilgrims to Massachusetts in 1620. It is true that most of the histories of the United States have been written by men of New England origin, and that therefore by natural predilection they have made more of the New England influence than of the other elements among the Colonies. Yet this is not altogether the result of prejudice; for, despite the splendid roll of soldiers and statesmen from the Middle and Southern sections of the country who bore so large a share in the critical events of the transition

era of the Revolution, it remains that the brunt of resistance to tyranny fell first and heaviest on New England, and that the principal influences that prepared the general sentiment of revolt, union, war, and independence proceeded from those colonies.

The Puritan exodus from England, chiefly from the eastern counties, first to Holland, and then to New England, was at its height during the persecutions of Archbishop Laud in the reign of Charles I. The Pilgrims — as the small company of Separatists were called who followed their Puritanism to the extent of breaking entirely away from the Church, and who left Holland for America — came to barren shores, after having learned many things from the Dutch. Their pilgrimage was taken, not with the view of improving their fortunes, like the more aristocratic settlers of Virginia, but to develop their peculiar ideas. It must be borne in mind that the civilization they brought with them was a growth from Teutonic ancestry, — an evolution from Saxon times, although it is difficult to trace the successive developments during the Norman rule. The Pilgrims brought with them to America an intense love of liberty, and consequently an equally intense hatred of arbitrary taxation. Their enjoyment of religious rights was surpassed only by their aversion to Episcopacy. They were a plain and simple people, who abhorred the

vices of the patrician class at home; but they loved learning, and sought to extend knowledge, as the bulwark of free institutions. The Puritans who followed them within ten years and settled Massachusetts Bay and Salem, were direct from England. They were not Separatists, like the Pilgrims, but Presbyterians; they hated Episcopacy, but would have had Church and State united under Presbyterianism. They were intolerant, as against Roger Williams and the "witches," and at first perpetrated cruelties like those from which they themselves had fled. But something in the free air of the big continent developed the spirit of liberty among them until they, too, like the Pilgrims, became Independents and Separatists, — and so, Congregationalists rather than Presbyterians.

The first thing we note among these New Englanders was their town-meetings, derived from the ancient folkmote, in which they elected their magistrates, and imposed upon themselves the necessary taxes for schools, highways, and officers of the law. They formed self-governed communities, who selected for rulers their ablest and fittest men, marked for their integrity and intelligence, — grave, austere, unselfish, and incorruptible. Money was of little account in comparison with character. The earliest settlers were the picked and chosen men of the yeomanry of England, and generally thrifty and prosperous. Their leaders had

had high social positions in their English homes, and their ministers were chiefly graduates of the universities, some of whom were fine scholars in both Hebrew and Greek, had been settled in important parishes, and would have attained high ecclesiastical rank had they not been nonconformists, — opposed to the ritual, rather than the theological tenets of the English Church as established by Elizabeth. Of course they were Calvinists, more rigid even than their brethren in Geneva. The Bible was to them the ultimate standard of authority — civil and religious. The only restriction on suffrage was its being conditioned on church-membership. They aspired, probably from Calvinistic influence, but aspired in vain, to establish a theocracy, borrowed somewhat from that of the Jews. I do not agree with Mr. John Fiske, in his able and interesting history of the "Beginnings of New England," that "the Puritan appealed to reason;" I think that the Bible was their ultimate authority in all matters pertaining to religion. As to civil government, the reason may have had a great place in their institutions; but these grew up from their surroundings rather than from study or the experience of the past. There was more originality in them than it is customary to suppose. They were the development of Old England life in New England, but grew in many respects away from the parent stock.

The next thing of mark among the Colonists was their love of learning; all children were taught to read and write. They had been settled at Plymouth, Salem, and Boston less than twenty years when they established Harvard College, chiefly for the education of ministers, who took the highest social rank in the Colonies, and were the most influential people. Lawyers and physicians were not so well educated. As for lawyers, there was but little need of them, since disputes were mostly settled either by the ministers or the selectmen of the towns, who were the most able and respectable men of the community. What the theocratic Puritans desired the most was educated ministers and schoolmasters. In 1641 a school was established in Hartford, Connecticut, which was free to the poor. By 1642 every township in Massachusetts had a schoolmaster, and in 1665 every one embracing fifty families a common school. If the town had over one hundred families it had a grammar school, in which Latin was taught. It is probable, however, that the idea of popular education originated with the Dutch. Elizabeth and her ministers did not believe in the education of the masses, of which we read but little until the present century. As early as 1582 the Estates of Friesland decreed that the inhabitants of towns and villages should provide good and able Reformed schoolmasters, so that when the

English nonconformists dwelt in Leyden in 1609 the school, according to Motley, had become the common property of the people.

The next thing we note among the Colonists of New England is the confederation of towns and their representation in the Legislature, or the General Court. This was formed to settle questions of common interest, to facilitate commerce, to establish a judicial system, to devise means for protection against hostile Indians, to raise taxes to support the common government. The Legislature, composed of delegates chosen by the towns, exercised most of the rights of sovereignty, especially in the direction of military affairs and the collection of revenue.

The governors were chosen by the people in secret ballot, until the liberal charter granted by Charles I. was revoked, and a royal governor was placed over the four confederated Colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven. This confederation was not a federal union, but simply a league for mutual defence against the Indians. Each Colony managed its own internal affairs, without interference from England, until 1684.

Down to this time the Colonies had been too insignificant to attract much notice in England, and hence were left to develop their institutions in their own way, according to the circumstances which con-

trolled them, and the dangers with which they were surrounded. One thing is clear: the infant Colonies governed themselves, and elected their own magistrates, from the governor to the selectmen; and this was true as well of the Middle and Southern as of the Eastern Colonies. Even in Virginia quite as large a proportion of the people took part in elections as in Massachusetts. It is difficult to find any similar instance of uncontrolled self-government, either in Holland or England at any period of their history. Either the king, or the Parliament, or the lord of the manor, or the parish priest controlled appointments or interfered with them, and even when the people directly selected their magistrates, suffrage was not universal, as it gradually came to be in the Colonies, with slight restrictions, — one of the features of the development of American institutions.

Another thing we notice among the Colonies, which had no inconsiderable influence on their growth, was the use of fire-arms among all the people, to defend themselves from hostile Indians. Every man had his musket and powder-flask; and there were several periods when it was not safe even to go to church unarmed. Thus were the new settlers inured to danger and self-defence, and bloody contests with their savage foes. They grew up practically soldiers, and formed a firm material for an effective militia,

able to face regular troops and even engage in effective operations, as seen afterwards in the conquest of Louisburg by Sir William Pepperell, a Kittery merchant. But for the universal use of fire-arms, either for war or game, it is doubtful if the Colonies could have won their independence. And it is interesting to notice that, while the free carrying of weapons, in these later days at least, is apt to result in rough lawlessness, as in our frontier regions, among the serious and law-abiding Colonists of those early times it was not so. This was probably due both to their strict religious obligations and to the presence of their wives and children.

The unrestricted selection of parish ministers by the people was no slight cause of New England growth, and was also a peculiar custom or institution not seen in the mother country, where appointment to parishes was chiefly in the hands of the aristocracy or the crown. Either the king, or the lord chancellor, or the universities, or the nobility, or the county squires had the gift of the "livings," often bestowed on ignorant or worldly or inefficient men, the younger sons of men of rank, who made no mark, and were incapable of instruction or indifferent to their duties. In New England the minister of the parish was elected by the church members or congregation, and if he could not edify his hearers by his sermons, or if his char-

acter did not command respect, his occupation was gone, or his salary was not paid. In consequence the ministers were generally gifted men, well educated, and in sympathy with the people. Who can estimate the influence of such religious teachers on everything that pertained to New England life and growth, — on morals, on education, on religious and civil institutions!

Although we have traced the early characteristics of the New England Colonists, especially because it was in New England first and chiefly that the spirit of resistance to English oppression grew to a sentiment for independence, it is not to be overlooked that the essential elements of self-controlling manhood were common throughout all the Colonies. And everywhere it seems to have grown out of the germ of a devotion to religious freedom, developed on a secluded continent, where men were shut in by the sea on the one hand, and perils from the fierce aborigines on the other. The Puritans of New England, the Hollanders of New York, Penn's Quaker colony in Pennsylvania, the Huguenots of South Carolina, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, were all of Calvinistic training and came from European persecutions. All were rigidly Puritanical in their social and Sabbatarian observances. Even the Episcopalians of Virginia,

where a larger Norman-English stock was settled, with infusions of French-Huguenot blood, and where slavery bred more men of wealth and broader social distinctions, were sternly religious in their laws, although far more lax and pleasure-loving in their customs. Everywhere, this new life of Englishmen in a new land developed their self-reliance, their power of work, their skill in arms, their habit of common association for common purposes, and their keen, intelligent knowledge of political conditions, with a tenacious grip on their rights as Englishmen.

In the enjoyment, then, of unknown civil and religious liberties, of equal laws, and a mild government, the Colonies rapidly grew, in spite of Indian wars. In New England they had also to combat a hard soil and a cold climate. Their equals in rugged strength, in domestic virtues, in religious veneration were not to be seen on the face of the whole earth. They may have been intolerant, narrow-minded, brusque and rough in manners, and with little love or appreciation of art; they may have been opinionated and self-sufficient: but they were loyal to duties and to their "Invisible King." Above all things, they were tenacious of their rights, and scrupled no sacrifices to secure them, and to perpetuate them among their children.

It is not my object to describe the history of the

Puritans, after they had made a firm settlement in the primeval forests, down to the Revolutionary War, but only to glance at the institutions they created or adopted, which have extended more or less over all parts of North America, and laid the foundation for a magnificent empire.

At the close of the Seven Years' War, in 1760, which ended in the conquest of Canada from the French by the combined forces of England and her American subjects, the population of the Colonies — in New England and the Middle and Southern sections — was not far from two millions. Success in war and some development in wealth naturally engendered self-confidence. I apprehend that the secret and unavowed consciousness of power, creating the desire to be a nation rather than a mere colony dependent on Great Britain, — or, if colonies, yet free and untrammelled by the home government, — had as much to do with the struggle for independence as the discussion of rights, at least among the leaders of the people, both clerical and lay. The feeling that they were not represented in Parliament was not of much account, for more than three quarters of the English at home had no representation at all. To be represented in Parliament was utterly impracticable, and everybody knew it. But when arbitrary measures were adopted by the English government, in defiance

of charters, the popular orators made a good point in magnifying the injustice of "taxation without representation."

The Colonies had been marvellously prospered, and if not rich they were powerful, and were spreading toward the indefinite and unexplored West. The Seven Years' War had developed their military capacity. It was New England troops which had taken Louisburg. The charm of British invincibility had been broken by Braddock's defeat. The Americans had learned self-reliance in their wars with the Indians, and had nearly exterminated them along the coast without British aid. The Colonists three thousand miles away from England had begun to feel their importance, and to realize the difficulty of their conquest by any forces that England could command. The self-exaggeration common to all new countries was universal. Few as the people were, compared with the population of the mother country, their imagination was boundless. They felt, if they did not clearly foresee, their inevitable future. The North American continent was theirs by actual settlement and long habits of self-government, and they were determined to keep it. Why should they be dependent on a country that crippled their commerce, that stifled their manufactures, that regulated their fisheries, that appointed their governors, and regarded them

with selfish ends, — as a people to be taxed in order that English merchants and manufacturers should be enriched? They did not feel weak or dependent; what new settlers in the Western wilds ever felt that they could not take care of their farms and their flocks and everything which they owned?

Doubtless such sentiments animated far-reaching men, to whom liberty was so sweet, and power so enchanting. They could not openly avow them without danger of arrest, until resistance was organized. They contented themselves with making the most of oppressive English legislation, to stimulate the people to discontent and rebellion. Ambition was hidden under the burden of taxation which was to make them slaves. Although among the leaders there was great veneration for English tradition and law, the love they professed for England was rather an ideal sentiment than an actual feeling, except among aristocrats and men of rank.

Nor was it natural that the Colonists, especially the Puritans, should cherish much real affection for a country that had persecuted them and driven them away. They felt that not so much Old England as New England was their home, in which new sentiments had been born, and new aspirations had been cultivated. It was very seldom that a colonist visited England at all, and except among the recent

comers their English relatives were for the most part unknown. Loyalty to the king was gradually supplanted by devotion to the institutions which they had adopted, or themselves created. In a certain sense they admitted that they were still subject to Great Britain, but one hundred and fifty years of self-government had nearly destroyed this feeling of allegiance, especially when they were aroused to deny the right of the English government to tax them without their own consent.

With the denial of the right of taxation by England naturally came resistance.

The first line of opposition arose under a new attempt of England to enforce the Sugar Act, which was passed to prevent the American importation of sugar and molasses from the West Indies, in exchange for lumber and agricultural products. It had been suffered to fall into abeyance; but suddenly in 1761 the government issued Writs of Assistance or search-warrants, authorizing customs officers to enter private stores and dwellings to find imported goods, not necessarily known but when even suspected to be there. This was first brought to bear in Massachusetts, where the Colonists spiritedly refused to submit, and took the matter into the courts. James Otis, a young Boston lawyer, was advocate for the Admiralty, but, resigning his commission, he appeared on behalf of the people,

and his fiery eloquence aroused the Colonists to a high pitch of revolutionary resolve. John Adams, who heard the speech, declared, "Then and there American independence was born." Independence, however, was not yet in most men's minds, but the spirit of resistance to arbitrary acts of the sovereign was unmistakably aroused. In 1763 a no less memorable contest arose in Virginia, when the king refused to sanction a law of the colonial legislature imposing a tax which the clergy were unwilling to submit to. This too was tested in the courts, and a young lawyer named Patrick Henry defended so eloquently the right of Virginia to make her own laws in spite of the king, that his passionate oratory inflamed all that colony with the same "treasonable" spirit.

But the centre of resistance was in Boston, where in 1765 the people were incited to enthusiasm by the eloquence of James Otis and Samuel Adams, in reference to still another restrictive tax, the Stamp Act, which could not be enforced, except by overwhelming military forces, and was wisely repealed by Parliament. This was followed by the imposition of duties on wine, oil, fruits, glass, paper, lead, colors and especially tea, an indirect taxation, but equally obnoxious; increasing popular excitement, the sending of troops, collision between the soldiers and the people in 1770, and in 1773 the rebellious act of the famous "Tea Party."

when citizens in the guise of Indians emptied the chests of tea on board merchantmen into Boston harbor. Soon after, the Boston Port Bill was passed, which shut up American commerce and created immense irritation. Then were sent to the rebellious city regiments of British troops to enforce the acts of Parliament; and finally the troops were, at the people's expense, quartered in the town, which was treated as a conquered city.

In view of these disturbances and hostile acts, the first Continental Congress of the different colonies met in Philadelphia, September, 1774, and issued a petition to the king, an address to the people of Great Britain, and an address to the Colonies, thus making a last effort for conciliation. The British Government, obstinately refusing to listen to its own wisest counsellors, replied with restraining acts, forbidding participation in the fisheries and other remunerative sea-work. Moreover, it declared Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion; in consequence of which the whole province prepared for war. At the same time the colonial legislatures promptly approved and agreed to sustain the acts of the Continental Congress. Nor did they neglect to appoint committees of safety for calling out minute men and committees of supplies for arming and provisioning them. General Gage, the British military commander in Massachusetts, attempted to de-

stroy the collection of ammunition and stores at Concord, and in consequence, on April 19, 1775, the battle of Lexington was fought, followed in June by that of Bunker Hill.

Thus began the American Revolution, which ended in the independence of the thirteen Colonies and their federal union as States under a common constitution.

As the empire of the Union expanded, as power grew, as opportunities increased, so did obstructions arise and complications multiply. But what I have called "the American idea" — which I conceive to be *Liberty under Law* — has proved equal to all emergencies. The marvellous success with which American institutions have provided for the development of the Anglo-Saxon idea of individual independence, without endangering the common weal and rule, has been largely due to the arising of great and wise administrators of the public will.

It is to a consideration of some of the chief of these notable men who have guided the fortunes of the American people from the Revolutionary period to the close of the Civil War, that I invite the attention of the reader in the following pages. Those who have not materially modified the condition of public affairs I omit to discuss at large, eminent as have been their talents and services. Consequently I pass by the administrations of all the presidents since Jefferson.

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except those of Jackson and Lincoln, the former having made a new departure in national policy, and the latter having brought to a conclusion a great war. I consider that Franklin, Clay, and Calhoun did more than any of the presidents, except those I have mentioned, to affect the destinies of the country, and therefore I could not omit them. Of Hamilton and Webster I have already treated in another volume.[1]

There will necessarily be some repetitions of fact in discussing the relations of different men to the same group of events, but this has been so far as possible avoided. And since my aim is the portrayal of character and influence, rather than the narration of historical annals, I have omitted vast numbers of interesting details, selecting only those of salient and vital importance.

[1] *Beacon Lights of History*, Volume IV., "Great Warriors and Statesmen."

LXXIV.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

DIPLOMACY.

1706–1790.

LXXIV.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

DIPLOMACY.

AT the commencement of the Revolutionary War, the most prominent and influential man in the colonies was perhaps Benjamin Franklin, then sixty-nine years of age. Certainly it cannot be doubted that he was one of the most illustrious founders of the American Republic. Among the great statesmen of the period, his fame is second only to that of Washington.

I will not dwell on his early life, since that part of his history is better known than that of any other of our great men, from the charming autobiography which he began to write but never cared to finish. He was born in Boston, January 17, 1706, the youngest but two of seventeen children. His father was a narrow-minded English Puritan, but respectable and conscientious, — a tallow-chandler by trade; and his ancestors for several generations had been blacksmiths in the little village of Ecton in Northamptonshire,

England. He was a precocious boy, not over-promising from a moral and religious point of view, but inordinately fond of reading such books as were accessible, especially those of a sceptical character. He had no sympathy with the theological doctrines then in vogue in his native town. At eight years of age he was sent to a grammar school, and at ten he was taken from it to assist his father in soap-boiling; but, showing a repugnance to this sort of business, he was apprenticed to his brother James at the age of twelve, to learn the art, or trade, of a printer. At fifteen we find him writing anonymously, for his brother's newspaper which had just been started, an article which gave offence to the provincial government, and led to a quarrel with his brother, who, it seems, was harsh and tyrannical.

Boston at this time was a flourishing town of probably about ten thousand or twelve thousand people, governed practically by the Calvinistic ministers, and composed chiefly of merchants, fishermen, and ship-carpenters, yet all tolerably versed in the rudiments of education and in theological speculations. The young Benjamin, having no liking for the opinions, manners, and customs of this strait-laced town, or for his cold and overbearing brother, concluded in his seventeenth year to run away from his apprenticeship. He found himself in a few days in New York, without

money, or friends, or employment. The printers' trade was not so flourishing in the Dutch capital as in the Yankee one he had left, and he wandered on to Philadelphia, the largest town in the colonies, whose inhabitants were chiefly Quakers, — thrifty, prosperous, tolerant, and kind-hearted. Fortunately, there were several printing-presses in this settlement; and after a while, through the kindness of a stranger, — who took an interest in him and pitied his forlorn condition, wandering up and down Market Street, poorly dressed, and with a halfpenny roll in his hand, or who was attracted by his bright and honest face, frank manners, and expressive utterances, — Franklin got work, with small wages. His industry and ability soon enabled him to make a better appearance, and attract friends by his uncommon social qualities.

It does not appear that Franklin was particularly frugal as a young man. He spent his money lavishly in convivial entertainments, of which he was the life, among his humble companions, a favorite not only with them, but with all the girls whose acquaintance he made. So remarkable was he for wit, good nature, and intelligence that at the age of eighteen he attracted the notice of the governor of the province, who promised to set him up in business, and encouraged him to go England to purchase types and a

printing-press. But before he sailed, having earned money enough to buy a fine suit of clothes and a watch, he visited his old home, and paraded his success with indiscreet ostentation, much to the disgust of his brother to whom he had been apprenticed.

On the young man's return to Philadelphia, the governor, Sir William Keith, gave him letters to some influential people in England, with promises of pecuniary aid, which, however, he never kept; so that when Franklin arrived in London he found himself without money or friends. But he was not discouraged. He soon found employment as a printer and retrieved his fortunes, leading a gay life, and spending his money, as fast as he earned it, at theatres and in social enjoyments with boon companions of doubtful respectability. Disgusted with London, or disappointed in his expectations, he returned to Philadelphia in 1726 as a mercantile clerk for a Mr. Durham, who shortly after died; and Franklin resumed his old employment with his former employer, Keimer, the printer.

On his long voyage home he had had time for reflection, and resolved to turn over a new leaf, and become more frugal and respectable. He would not give up his social pleasures, but would stick to his business, and employ his leisure time in profitable reading. This, Mr. Parton calls his "regeneration."

Others might view it as the completion of "sowing his wild oats." He certainly made himself very useful to the old visionary Keimer, who printed bank-notes for New Jersey, by making improvements on the copper plate; but he soon left this employment and set up for himself, in partnership with another young man.

The young printers started fairly, and hired the lower part of a house in Market Street, most of which they sublet. Their first job brought them but five shillings. Soon after, they were employed to print a voluminous history of the Quakers, at a very small profit; but the work was so well done that it led to a great increase of business.

The idea then occurred to Franklin to print a newspaper, there being but one in the colony, and that miserably dull. His old employer Keimer, hearing of his purpose accidentally, stole the march on him, and started a newspaper on his own account, but was soon obliged to sell out to Franklin and Meredith, not being able to manage the undertaking. "The Pennsylvania Gazette" proved a great success, and was remarkable for its brilliant and original articles, which brought the editor, then but twenty-three years old, into immediate notice. He had become frugal and industrious, but had not as yet renounced his hilarious habits, and could scarcely be called moral, for

about this time a son was born to him of a woman whose name was never publicly known. This son was educated by Franklin, and became in later years the royal governor of New Jersey.

Franklin was unfortunate in his business partner, who fell into drinking habits, so that he was obliged to dissolve the partnership. In connection with his printing-office, he opened a small stationer's-shop, and sold blanks, paper, ink, and pedler's wares. His business increased so much that he took an apprentice, and hired a journeyman from London. He now gave up fishing and shooting, and convivial habits, and devoted himself to money-making; but not exclusively, since at this time he organized a club of twelve members, called the "Junto," — a sort of debating and reading society. This club contrived to purchase about fifty books, which were lent round, and formed the nucleus of a circulating library, which grew into the famous Franklin Library, one of the prominent institutions of Philadelphia. In 1730, at the age of twenty-four, he married Deborah Reid, a pretty, kind-hearted, and frugal woman, with whom he lived happily for forty-four years. She was a true helpmeet, who stitched his pamphlets, folded his newspapers, waited on customers at the shop, and nursed and tended his illegitimate child.

After his marriage Franklin gave up what had

habits he had acquired, though he never lost his enjoyment of society. He was what used to be called "a good liver," and took but little exercise, thus laying the foundation for gout, a disease which tormented him in the decline of life. He also somewhat amended his religious creed, and avowed his belief in a superintending Providence and his own moral accountability to God, discharging conscientiously the duties to be logically deduced from these beliefs,— submission to the Divine will, and kindly acts to his neighbors. He was benevolent, sincere, and just in his dealings, abhorring deceit, flattery, falsehood, injustice, and all dishonesty.

From this time Franklin rapidly gained in public esteem for his integrity, his sagacity, and his unrivalled good sense. His humor, wit, and conversational ability caused his society to be universally sought. He was a good judge of books for his infant library, and he took a great interest in everything connected with education. He was the life of his literary club, and made reading fashionable among the Quakers, who composed the leading citizens of the town,—a people tolerant but narrow, frugal but appreciative of things good to eat, kind-hearted but not remarkable for generosity, except to the poor of their own denomination, law-abiding but not progressive, modest and unassuming but conscious and conceited, as most

self-educated people are. It is a wonder that a self-educated man like Franklin was so broad and liberal in all his views, — an impersonation of good nature and catholicity, ever open to new convictions, and respectful of opinions he did not share, provoking mirth and jollity, yet never disturbing the placidity of a social gathering by irritating sarcasm.

Franklin's newspaper gave him prodigious influence, both social and political, in the infancy of journalism. It was universally admitted to be the best in the country. Its circulation rapidly increased, and it was well managed financially. James Parton tells us that Franklin "originated the modern system of business advertising." His essays, or articles, as we now call them, had great point, vivacity, and wit, and soon became famous; they thus prepared the way for his almanac, — originally entitled "Richard Saunders," and selling for five pence. The sayings of "Poor Richard" in this little publication combined more wisdom and good sense in a brief compass than any other book published in America during the eighteenth century. It reached the firesides of almost every hamlet in the colonies. The New England divines thought them deficient in spirituality, rather worldly in their form, and useful only in helping people to get on in their daily pursuits. But the eighteenth century was not a spiritual age, in comparison with

the age which preceded it, either in Europe or America. The acute and exhaustive treatises of the seventeenth century on God, on "fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute," on the foundation of morals, on consciousness as a guide in metaphysical speculation, had lost much of their prestige, if Jonathan Edwards' immortal deductions may be considered an exception. Prosperity and wars and adventures had made men material, and political themes had more charm than theological discussion. Pascal had given place to Hobbes and Voltaire, and Hooker to Paley. In such a state of society, "Poor Richard," inculcating thrift and economy, in English as plain and lucid as that of Cobbett half a century later, had an immense popularity. For twenty-five years, it annually made its way into nearly every household in the land. Such a proverbial philosophy as "Honesty is the best policy," "Necessity never made a good bargain," "Fish and visitors smell in three days," "God heals, and the doctors take the fees," "Keep your eyes open before marriage, and half shut afterwards," "To bear other people's afflictions, every one has courage enough and to spare," — savored of a blended irony and cynicism exceedingly attractive to men of the world and wise old women, even in New England parishes, whatever Calvinistic ministers might say of the "higher life." The sale of the almanac was

greater than that of the "Pilgrim's Progress," and the wealth of Franklin stood out in marked contrast with the poverty of Bunyan a century before.

The business enterprise of the gifted publisher at this time was a most noticeable thing. He began to import books from England and to print anything that had money in it, — from political tracts to popular poems, from the sermons of Wesley to the essays of Cicero. He made no mistakes as to the popular taste. He became rich because he was sagacious, and an oracle because he was rich as well as because he was wise. Everybody asked his advice, and his replies were alike courteous and witty, although sometimes ironical. "Friend Franklin," said a noted Quaker lawyer, "thou knowest everything, — canst thou tell me how I am to preserve my small beer in the back yard? for I find that my neighbors are tapping it for me." "Put a barrel of Madeira beside it," replied the sage.

In 1736 Franklin was elected clerk of the General Assembly, — a position which brought more business than honor or emolument. It secured his acquaintance with prominent men, many of whom became his friends; for it was one of his gifts to win hearts. It also made him acquainted with public affairs. Its chief advantage, however, was that it gave him the public printing. His appointment in 1737 as post-

master in Philadelphia served much the same purposes. With increase of business, the result of industry and good work, and of influence based on character, he was, when but thirty years old, one of the most prominent citizens of Philadelphia. His success as a business man was settled. He had the best printing jobs in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Delaware. No one could compete with him successfully. He inspired confidence while he enlarged his friendships, to which he was never indifferent. Whatever he touched turned to gold. His almanac was a mine of wealth; the sermons he printed, and the school-books he manufactured, sold equally well. With constantly increasing prosperity, he kept a level head, and lived with simplicity over his shop, — most business men lived over their shops, in both England and America at that period. He got up early in the morning, worked nine or ten hours a day, spent his evenings in reading and study, and went to bed at ten, finding time to keep up his Latin, and to acquire French, Spanish, and Italian, to make social visits, and play chess, of which game he was extravagantly fond till he was eighty years old. His income, from business and investments, was not far from ten thousand dollars a year, — a large sum in those days, when there was not a millionaire in the whole country, except perhaps among the Virginia planters.

Franklin was not ambitious to acquire a large fortune; he only desired a competency on which he might withdraw to the pursuit of higher ends than printing books. He had the profound conviction that great attainments in science or literature required easy and independent circumstances. It is indeed possible for genius to surmount any obstacles, but how few men have reached fame as philosophers or historians or even poets without leisure and freedom from pecuniary cares! I cannot recall a great history that has been written by a poor man in any age or country, unless he had a pension, or office of some kind, involving duties more or less nominal, which gave him both leisure and his daily bread, — like Hume as a librarian in Edinburgh, or Neander as a professor in Berlin.

Franklin, after twenty years of assiduous business and fortunate investments, was able to retire on an income of about four thousand dollars a year, which in those times was a comfortable independence anywhere. He retired with the universal respect of the community both as a business man and a man of culture. Thus far his career was not extraordinary, not differing much from that of thousands of others in the mercantile history of this country, or any other country. By industry, sagacity, and thrift he had simply surmounted the necessity of work, and had so improved his leisure hours by reading and study as to be on an

intellectual equality with anybody in the most populous and wealthy city in the country. Had he died before 1747 his name probably would not have descended to our times. He would have had only a local reputation as a philanthropical, intelligent, and successful business man, a printer by trade, who could both write and talk well, but was not able to make a better speech on a public occasion than many others who had no pretension to fame.

But a new career was opened to Franklin with the attainment of leisure and independence, — the career of a scientific investigator. The subject which most interested him was electricity, just then exciting great interest in Europe. In 1746 he attended in Boston a lecture on electricity by Dr. Spence, of Scotland, which induced him to make experiments himself, the result of which was to demonstrate to his mind the identity of the electrical current with lightning. What the new, mysterious power was, of course he could not tell, nor could any one else. All he knew was that sparks, under certain conditions, were emitted from clothing, furs, amber, jet, glass, sealing-wax, and other substances when excited by friction, and that the power thus producing the electric sparks would repel and attract. That amber, when rubbed, possesses the property of attracting and repelling light bodies was known to Thales and Pliny, and subsequent philoso-

phers discovered that other substances also were capable of electrical excitation. In process of time Otto Guericke added to these simple discoveries that of electric light, still further established by Isaac Newton, with his glass globe. A Dutch philosopher at Leyden, having observed that excited electrics soon lost their electricity in the open air, especially when the air was full of moisture, conceived the idea that the electricity of bodies might be retained by surrounding them with bodies which did not conduct it; and in 1745 the Leyden jar was invented, which led to the knowledge that the force of electricity could be extended through an indefinite circuit. The French savants conveyed the electric current through a circuit of twelve thousand feet.

It belonged to Franklin, however, to raise the knowledge of electricity to the dignity of a science. By a series of experiments, extending from 1747 to 1760, he established the fact that electricity is not created by friction, but merely collected from its state of diffusion through other matter to which it has been attracted. He showed further that all the phenomena produced by electricity had their counterparts in lightning. As it was obvious that thunder clouds contained an immense quantity of the electrical element, he devised a means to draw it from the clouds by rods erected on elevated buildings. As this was

not sufficiently demonstrative he succeeded at length in drawing the lightning from the clouds by means of a kite and silken string, so as to ignite spirits and other combustible substances by an electric spark similar to those from a Leyden jar. To utilize his discovery of the identity of lightning with electricity he erected lightning rods to protect buildings, that is, to convey the lightning from the overhanging clouds through conductors to the ground. The importance of these lightning rods was doubtless exaggerated. It is now thought by high scientific authorities that tall trees around a house are safer conductors in a thunder storm than metallic rods; but his invention was universally prized most highly for more than one hundred years, and his various further experiments and researches raised his fame as a philosopher throughout Europe. His house was a museum of electrical apparatus, and he became the foremost electrician in the world. His essays on the subject were collected and printed abroad, and translated into several languages, and among the scientists and philosophers of Europe he was the best known American of his time; while at home both Harvard and Yale Colleges conferred on this self-educated printer's-apprentice the degree of Master of Arts.

The inquiring mind of Franklin did not rest with experiments in the heavens. As a wealthy and inde-

pendent citizen of Philadelphia he interested himself in all matters of public improvement. He founded a philosophical society to spread useful knowledge of all kinds. He laid the foundation of what is now the University of Pennsylvania, and secured a charter from George II.; but he had little sympathy with the teaching of dead languages, attaching much more importance to the knowledge of French and Spanish than of Latin and Greek. We see in all his public improvements the utilitarian spirit which has marked the genius of this country, but a spirit directed into philanthropic channels. Hence he secured funds to build a hospital, which has grown into one of the largest in the United States. He established the first fire company in Philadelphia, as well as the first fire insurance company; he induced the citizens of Philadelphia to pave and sweep their streets, which were almost impassable in rainy weather; he reorganized the night-watch of the town; he improved the street-lighting; he was the trustee of a society to aid German immigrants; he started a volunteer military organization for defence of the State against the Indians; he made a new fertilizer for the use of farmers; he invented the open "Franklin stove" to save heat and remedy the intolerable smoky chimneys which the large flues of the time made very common; he introduced into Pennsylvania the culture

of the vine; in short, he was always on the alert to improve the material condition of the people. Nor did he neglect their intellectual improvement, inciting them to the formation of debating societies, and founding libraries. His intent, however, was avowedly utilitarian, to "supply the vulgar wants of mankind," which he placed above any form of spiritual philosophy, — inculcating always the worldly expediency of good character and the poor economy of vice. Herein he agreed with Macaulay's idea of progress as brought out in his essay on Lord Bacon. He never soared beyond this theory in his views of life and duty. The Puritanic idea of spiritual loftiness he never reached and never appreciated.

But it was not as a public-spirited citizen, nor as a successful man of business, nor even as a scientific investigator, that Franklin earned his permanent fame. In each of these respects he has been surpassed by men of whom little is known. These activities might have elevated him into notice and distinction, but would not have made him an immortal benefactor to his country. It was his services as a diplomatist and a political oracle, united with his patriotism and wisdom, that gave to him his extraordinary prominence in American history.

It should be remarked, however, that before his diplomatic career began, Franklin had become exception-

ally familiar with the affairs of the Colonies. We have already noted his appointment as postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737. This experience led to his employment by the Postmaster-General of the Colonies in regulating the accounts of that widely extended department, and to Franklin's appointment in 1753 to the head of it, which greatly increased his specific knowledge of men and affairs throughout the whole land. Besides this, he had gained some political experience as a member of the provincial General Assembly, of which he had been clerk for twenty years, and thus was well acquainted with public men and measures. The Assembly consisted of only forty members, who were in constant antagonism with the governor, James Hamilton, whom the Penns, the Proprietaries of the province, had appointed to look after their interests. This official was a narrow-minded, intriguing Englishman, while the sons of William Penn themselves were selfish and grasping men, living in England, far distant from their possessions, and regarding themselves simply as English landlords of a vast estate. Under the royal charter granted by Charles II. to William Penn, his heirs exacted £30,000 yearly from the farmers as rent for their lands, — more than they could afford to pay. But when, in 1755, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, French and Indian hostilities put the whole province in jeopardy, and it became

necessary for the Provincial Legislature to tax the whole population for the common defence, the governor thought that the estates of the Proprietaries should be exempted from this just tax. Hence a collision between the legislature and the governor.

The Quakers themselves, in accordance with their peace principles, were opposed to any war tax, but Franklin induced the Assembly to raise sixty thousand pounds to support the war, then conducted by General Braddock, while he himself secured a large number of wagons for the use of the army across the wilderness.

Meanwhile the Assembly was involved in fresh disputes with the governor. Although the Assembly taxed the Proprietaries but a small proportion for the defence of their own possessions, the governor was unwilling to pay even this small amount; which so disgusted Franklin that he lost his usual placidity and poured out such a volley of angry remonstrances that the governor resigned. His successor fared no better with the angry legislature, and it became necessary to send some one to England to lay the grievances of the Colonists before the government, and to obtain relief from Parliament.

The fittest man for this business was Franklin, and he was sent as agent of the Province of Pennsylvania to London, the Assembly granting fifteen hundred pounds to pay his expenses, which, with his own pri-

vate income, enabled him to live in good style in London and set up a carriage. He held no high diplomatic rank as yet, but was simply an accredited business agent of the Province, which position, however, secured to him an entrance into society to a limited extent, and many valuable acquaintances. The brothers Penn, with whom his business was chiefly concerned, were cold and haughty, and evaded the matter in dispute with miserable quibbles. Franklin then resolved to appeal to the Lords of Trade, who had the management of the American colonial affairs, and also to the King's Privy Council.

This was in 1757, when William Pitt was at the height of his power and fame, cold, reserved, proud, but intensely patriotic, before whom even George III. was ill at ease, while his associates in the Cabinet were simply his clerks, and servilely bent before his imperious will. To this great man Franklin had failed to gain access, not so much from the minister's disdain of the colonial agent, as from his engrossing cares and duties. He had no time, indeed, for anybody, not even the peers of the realm, — no time for pleasure or relaxation, — being devoted entirely to public interests of the greatest magnitude; for on his shoulders rested the government of the kingdom. What was the paltry dispute of a few hundred pounds in a distant colony to the Prime Minister of England!

All that Franklin could secure was an interview with the great man's secretaries, and they did little to help him.

But the time of the active-minded American was not wasted. He wrote for the newspapers; he prosecuted his scientific inquiries; he became intimate with many eminent men, chiefly scientists,—members of the Royal Society like Priestley and Price, professors of political economy like Adam Smith, historians like Hume and Robertson, original thinkers like Burke, liberal-minded lawyers like Pratt. It does not seem that he knew Dr. Johnson, and probably he did not care to make the acquaintance of that overbearing Tory and literary dogmatist, who had little sympathy with American troubles. Indeed his political associates among the great were few, unless they were patrons of science, who appreciated his attainments in a field comparatively new. Among these men he seems to have been much respected, and his merits secured an honorary degree from St. Andrew's. His eminent social qualities favored his introduction into a society more cultivated than fashionable, and he was known as a scientific rather than a political celebrity.

His mission, then, was up-hill work. The Penns stood upon their prerogatives, and the Lords of the Committee for Plantations were unfriendly or dilatory. It was nearly three years before they gave

their decision, and this was adverse to the Pennsylvania Assembly. The Privy Council, however, to whom the persistent agent appealed, composed of the great dignitaries of the realm, decided that the proprietary estates of the Penns should contribute their proportion of the public revenue. On this decision, Franklin, feeling that he had accomplished all that was possible, returned home in 1762, little more than a year after the accession of George III. Through the kindness of Lord Bute, the king's favorite, Franklin also secured the appointment of his son to the government of New Jersey. This appointment created some scandal, and the Penns rolled up their eyes, not at the nepotism of Franklin, but because he had procured the advancement of his illegitimate son.

Franklin, during his absence of more than five years, had been regularly re-elected a member of the Assembly, and he was received on his return with every possible public and private attention. He had hoped now for leisure to pursue his scientific investigations, and had accordingly taken a new and larger house. But before long new political troubles arose between the governor of Pennsylvania and the legislature, and what was still more ominous, troubles in New England respecting the taxation of the Colonies by the British government, at the head of which was Grenville, an able man but not far-sighted, who in March,

1764, announced his intention of introducing into Parliament the bill known as the Stamp Act.

To this famous bill there was not great opposition, since a large majority of the House of Commons believed in the right of taxing the Colonies. Lord Camden, a great lawyer, took different views. Burke and Pitt admitted the right of taxation, but thought its enforcement inexpedient, as likely to alienate the Colonies and make them enemies instead of loyal subjects.

At this crisis appeared in America a group of orators who at once aroused and intensified the prevailing discontents by their inflammatory speeches, in much the same manner that Wendell Phillips and Wm. Lloyd Garrison, seventy years later, aroused public sentiment in reference to slavery. James Otis, the lawyer from Barnstable on the shores of Cape Cod, who had opposed the Writs of Assistance, "led the van of these patriots, — an impassioned orator, incapable of cold calculation, now foaming with rage, and then desponding, not steadfast in conduct, yet by flashes of sagacity lighting the people along their perilous ways, combining legal learning with speculative opinion." He eloquently maintained that "there is no foundation for distinction between external and internal taxes; that the imposition of taxes in the Colonies whether on trade, on land, or houses, or float-

ing property, is absolutely irreconcilable with the rights of the Colonists as British subjects or as men, and that Acts of Parliament against the fundamental principles of the British Constitution are void."

More influential, and more consistent than Otis, was Samuel Adams, a lawyer of Boston, a member of the Massachusetts Assembly, at that time about forty years of age, a political agitator, a Puritan of the strictest creed, poor and indifferent to money, an incarnation of zeal for liberty, a believer in original, inherent rights which no Parliament can nullify, — a man of the keenest political sagacity in management, and of almost unlimited influence in Massachusetts from his long and notable services in town-meeting, Colonial Assembly, as writer in the journals of the day, and actor in every public crisis. Eleven years younger than he, was his cousin John Adams, a lawyer in Quincy, the leading politician of the colony, able and ambitious, patriotic and honest, but irascible and jealous, of whom I shall have more to say hereafter. Of about the same age as John Adams was Patrick Henry, of Virginia, a born orator, but of limited education. He espoused the American cause with extraordinary zeal, and as in the matter of the Virginia tax law, was vehement in opposition to the Stamp Act, as an unconstitutional statute, which the Colonies were not bound to obey. Christopher Gadsden, of Georgia, too, was

early among the prominent orators who incited opposition to the Stamp Act and other oppressive measures.

These men were the great pioneers of American Independence, by their ceaseless agitation of popular rights, and violent opposition to English schemes of taxation. They were not, indeed, the equals of Franklin, then the agent of Pennsylvania in London. They had not his catholicity, his breadth of knowledge, his reputation, or his genius; but they were nevertheless foremost among American political orators, and had great local influence.

The first overt act of hostility on the part of the English government in coercing the Colonies was to send to Boston, the seat of disaffection, a large body of soldiers. In 1768 there were four regiments of British troops in Boston, doubtless with the view of intimidation, and to enforce the collection of duties.

The English did not overrate the bravery of their troops or the abilities of their generals, but they did underrate the difficulties in conquering a population scattered over a vast extent of territory. They did not take into consideration the protecting power of nature, the impenetrable forests to be traversed, the mighty rivers to be crossed, the mountains to be climbed, and the coasts to be controlled. Nor did they comprehend the universal spirit of resistance in a vast country, and the power of sudden growth in a

passion for national independence. They might take cities and occupy strong fortifications, but the great mass of the people were safe on their inland farms and in their untrodden forests. The Americans may not have been unconquerable, but English troops were not numerous enough to overwhelm them in their scattered settlements. It would not pay to send army after army to be lost in swamps or drowned in rivers or ambushed and destroyed in forests.

It was in the earlier stages of the revolt against taxation, in the autumn of 1764, that Benjamin Franklin was again sent to England to represent the province of Pennsylvania in the difficulties which hung as a dark cloud over the whole land. He had done well as a financial agent; he might do still better as a diplomatist, since he was patient, prudent, sagacious, intelligent, and accustomed to society, besides having extraordinary knowledge of all phases of American affairs. And he probably was sincere in his desire for reconciliation with the mother-country, which he still deemed possible. He was no political enthusiast like Samuel Adams, desirous of cutting loose entirely from England, but a wise and sensible man, who was willing to wait for inevitable developments; intensely patriotic, but armed with the weapons of reason, and trusting in these alone until reconciliation should become impossible.

As soon as Franklin arrived in England he set about his difficult task to reason with infatuated ministers, and with all influential persons so far as he had opportunity. But such were the prevailing prejudices against the Colonists, and such was the bitterness of men in power that he was not courteously treated. He was even grossly insulted before the Privy Council by the Solicitor-General, Wedderburn, — one of those browbeating lawyers so common in England one hundred years ago, who made up in insolence what was lacking in legal ability. Grenville, the premier, was civil but stubborn, and attempted to show that there was no difference between the external, indirect taxation by duties on importations, and the direct, internal taxation proposed by the Stamp Act, — both being alike justifiable.

In March, 1765, the bill was passed by an immense majority. Then blazed forth indignation from every part of America, and the resolute Colonists set themselves to nullify the tax laws by refraining from all taxable transactions.

Franklin, undismayed, sedulously went about working for a repeal of the odious stamp law, and at length got a hearing at the bar of the House of Commons, where he was extensively and exhaustively examined upon American affairs. In this famous examination he won respect for the lucidity of his

statements and his conciliatory address. It soon became evident that the Stamp Act could not be enforced. No one could be compelled to buy stamps or pay tariff taxes if he preferred to withdraw from all business transactions, wear homespun, do without British manufactures, and even refrain from eating lamb that flocks of sheep might be increased and the wool used for homespun cloth.

It was in March, 1766, that Franklin, after many months of shrewd, wise, and extraordinarily skilful work with tongue and pen and social influence, had the satisfaction of seeing the Stamp Act repealed by Parliament and the bill signed by the unwilling king. Although he was at all possible disadvantage, as being merely the insignificant agent of distant and despised Colonists, his influence in the matter cannot be exaggerated. He made powerful friends and allies, and never failed to supply them with ample ammunition with which to fight their own political battles in which his cause was involved.

On the repeal of the Stamp Act, Grenville was compelled to resign, and his place was taken by Lord North, an amiable but narrow-minded man, utterly incapable of settling the pending difficulties. Lord Shelburne, a friend of the Colonies, of which he had the charge, was superseded by Lord Hillsborough, an Irish peer of great obstinacy, who treated Franklin

very roughly, and of whom the king himself soon tired. Lord Dartmouth, who succeeded him, might have arranged the difficulties had he not been hampered by the king, who was inflexibly bent on taxation in some form, and on pursuing impolitic measures, against the exhortations of Chatham, Barré, Conway, Camden, and other far-reading statesmen, who foresaw what the end would be.

Meantime, in 1770, Franklin was appointed agent also for Massachusetts Bay, and about the same time for New Jersey and Georgia. Schemes for colonial taxation were rife, and, although the Stamp Act had been withdrawn as impracticable, the principle involved was not given up by the English government nor accepted by the American people. Franklin was kept busy.

In 1773 Franklin was further impeded in his negotiations by mischievous letters which Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts had written to the Colonial office. This governor was an able man, a New Englander by birth, but an inveterate Tory, always at issue with the legislature, whose acts he had the power to veto. Indiscreetly, rather than maliciously, he represented the prevailing discontents in the worst light, and considerably increased the irritation of the English government. Franklin in some way got possession of these inflammatory let-

ters, and transmitted a copy to a leading member of the Massachusetts General Court, as a matter of information, but with the understanding that it should be kept secret. It leaked out however, of course, and the letters were printed. A storm of indignation in Massachusetts resulted in a petition for the removal of Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant-Governor Oliver, which was sent by the House of Representatives to Franklin for presentation to the government; while, on the other hand, a torrent of obloquy overwhelmed the diplomatist in England, who was thought to have stolen the letters, although there was no evidence to convict him.

Franklin's situation in London now became uncomfortable; he was deprived of his office of deputy Postmaster-General of the Colonies, which he had held since 1753, was virtually discredited, and generally snubbed. His presentation of the petition afforded an opportunity for his being publicly insulted at the hearing appointed before the Committee for Plantation Affairs, while the press denounced him as a fomenter of sedition. His work in England was done, and although he remained there some time longer, on the chance of still being of possible use, he gladly availed himself of an opportunity, early in 1775, to return to America. Before his departure, however, Lord Chatham had come to his rescue when he was one

day attacked with bitterness in the House of Lords, and pronounced upon him this splendid eulogium: "If," said the great statesman, "I were prime minister and had the care of settling this momentous business, I should not be ashamed to call to my assistance a person so well acquainted with American affairs, — one whom all Europe ranks with our Boyles and Newtons, as an honor, not to the English nation only, but to human nature itself."

From this time, 1775, no one accused Franklin of partiality to England. He was wounded and disgusted, and he now clearly saw that there could be no reconciliation between the mother-country and the Colonies, — that differences could be settled only by the last appeal of nations. The English government took the same view, and resorted to coercion, little dreaming of the difficulties of the task. This is not the place to rehearse those coercive measures, or to describe the burst of patriotic enthusiasm which swept over the Colonies to meet the issue by the sword. We must occupy ourselves with Franklin.

On his return to Philadelphia, at the age of sixty-nine, he was most cordially welcomed. His many labors were fully appreciated, and he was immediately chosen a member of the second Continental Congress, which met on the 10th of May, 1775. He was put on the most important committees, and

elected Postmaster-General. He was also selected as one of the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence. It does not appear that he was one of the foremost speakers. He was no orator, but his influence was greater than that of any other one man in the Congress. He entered heart and soul into the life-and-death struggle which drew upon it the eyes of the whole civilized world. He was tireless in committee work; he made long journeys on the business of the Congress, — to Montreal, to Boston, to New York; he spent the summer of 1776 as chairman of the first Constitutional Convention of the State of Pennsylvania: on every hand his resources were in demand and were lavishly given.

It was universally felt at the beginning of the struggle that unless the Colonies should receive material aid from France, the issue of the conflict with the greatest naval and military power in Europe could not succeed. Congress had no money, no credit, and but scanty military stores. The Continental troops were poorly armed, clothed, and fed. Franklin's cool head, his knowledge, his sagacity, his wisdom, and his patriotism marked him out as the fittest man to present the cause in Europe, and in September, 1776, he was sent to France as an envoy to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce between France and the United States. With him were joined Arthur Lee and

Silas Deane, the latter having been sent some months previously in a less formal way, to secure the loan of money, ammunition, and troops.

It is not to be supposed that the French monarchy had any deep sympathy with the Americans in their struggle for independence. Only a few years had elapsed since the Colonies had fought with England against France, to her intense humiliation. Canada had been by their help wrenched from her hands. But France hated England, and was jealous of her powers, and would do anything to cripple that traditionary enemy. Secret and mysterious overtures had been made to Congress which led it to hope for assistance. And yet the government of France could do nothing openly, for fear of giving umbrage to her rival, since the two powers were at peace, and both were weary of hostilities. Both were equally exhausted by the Seven Years' War. Moreover, the king, Louis XV., sought above all things repose and pleasure. It was a most unpropitious time for the Colonies to seek for aid, when the policy of the French government was pacific, and when Turgot was obliged to exert his financial genius to the utmost to keep the machine of government in running order.

Under these circumstances the greatest prudence, circumspection, and tact were required of a financial and diplomatic agent sent to squeeze money from the

French treasury. If aid were granted at all it must be done covertly, without exciting even the suspicions of the English emissaries at Paris. But hatred of England prevailed over the desire of peace, and money was promised. There were then in France many distinguished men who sympathized with the American cause, while the young king himself seems to have had no decided opinions about the matter.

The philosophy of Rousseau had permeated even aristocratic circles. There was a charm in the dogma that all men were "created equal." It pleased sentimental philosophers and sympathetic women. I wonder why the king, then absolute, did not see its logical consequences. Surely there were rumblings in the political atmosphere to which he could not be deaf, and yet with inconceivable apathy and levity the blinded monarch pursued his pleasures, and remarked to his courtiers that the storm would not burst in his time: "Après moi, le déluge."

Turgot, the ablest man in France, would have stood aloof; but Turgot had been dismissed, and the Count de Vergennes was at the helm, a man whose ruling passion was hatred of England. If he could help the Colonies he would, provided he could do it secretly. So he made use of a fortunate adventurer, originally a watchmaker, by the name of Beaumarchais who set up for a merchant, through whom supplies

were sent to America, — all paid for, however, out of the royal exchequer. The name, even, of this supposed mercantile house was fictitious. A million of livres were transmitted through this firm to America, apparently for business purposes, Silas Deane of Connecticut, the first agent of the Americans, alone being acquainted with the secret. He could not keep it, however, but imparted it to a friend, who was a British spy. In consequence, most of the ships of Hortalez & Co., loaded with military stores, were locked up by technical governmental formalities in French ports, while the American vessels bearing tobacco and indigo in exchange also failed to appear. The firm was in danger of bankruptcy, while Lord Stormont, the British ambassador, complained to Vergennes of the shipment of contraband goods, — an offence against the law of nations.

Amid the embarrassments which Deane had brought about by his indiscretion, Franklin arrived at Paris; but he wisely left Deane to disentangle the affairs of the supposed mercantile house, until this unfortunate agent was recalled by Congress, — a broken-down man, who soon after died in England, poor and dishonored. Deane had also embarrassed Franklin, and still more the military authorities at home, by the indiscriminate letters of commendation he gave to impecunious and incapable German and

French officers as being qualified to serve in the American army.

Probably no American ever was hailed in Paris with more éclat than Benjamin Franklin. His scientific discoveries, his cause invested with romantic interest, his courtly manners, his agreeable conversation, and his reputation for wisdom and wit, made him an immediate favorite among all classes with whom he came in contact. He was universally regarded as the apostle of liberty and the impersonation of philosophy. Not wishing to be too conspicuous, and dreading interruptions to his time, he took up his residence at Passy, a suburb of Paris, where he lived most comfortably, keeping a carriage and entertaining at dinner numerous guests. He had a beautiful garden, in which he delighted to show his experiments to distinguished people. His face always wore a placid and benignant expression. He had no enemies, and many friends. His society was particularly sought by fashionable ladies and eminent savants. While affable and courteous, he was not given to flattery. He was plain and straight-forward in all he said and did, thus presenting a striking contrast to diplomatists generally. Indeed, he was a universal favorite, which John Adams, when he came to be associated with him, could not understand. Adams was sent to France in 1778 to replace Silas Deane, and while there was

always jealous of Franklin's ascendency in society and in the management of American affairs. He even complained that the elder envoy was extravagant in his mode of living. In truth, Franklin alone had the ear of the Count de Vergennes, through whom all American business was transacted, which exceedingly nettled the intense, confident, and industrious Adams, whose vanity was excessive.

I need not dwell on the embarrassments of Franklin in raising money for the American cause. There was no general confidence in its success among European bankers or statesman. The French government feared to compromise itself. Many of the remittances already sent had been intercepted by British cruisers. The English minister at Paris stormed and threatened. The news from America was almost appalling, for the British troops had driven Washington from New York and Long Island, and he appeared to be scarcely more than a fugitive in New Jersey, with only three or four thousand half-starved and half-frozen followers. A force of ten thousand men had been recently ordered to America under General Burgoyne. Almost discouraged, the envoys applied for loans to the Dutch bankers and to Spain, but without success.

It was not until December, 1777, when the news arrived in France of the surrender of General Burgoyne and his army to the Americans at Saratoga,

New York, in August, that Franklin had any encouragement. Not until it was seen that the conquest of America was hopeless did the French government really come to the aid of the struggling cause, and then privately. Spain joined with France in offers of assistance; but as she had immense treasures on the ocean liable to capture, the matter was to be kept secret. When secrecy was no longer possible a commercial treaty was made between the United States and the allies, February 6, 1778, but was not signed until Arthur Lee, of Virginia, one of the commissioners, had made a good deal of mischief by his captious opposition to Franklin, whom he envied and hated. The treaty becoming known to the English government in a few days, Lord North, who saw breakers ahead, was now anxious for conciliation with America. It was too late. There could be no conciliation short of the acknowledgment of American independence, and a renewal of war between France and England became certain. If the conquest of the United States had been improbable, it now had become impossible, with both France and Spain as their allies. But the English government, with stubborn malignity, persevered in the hopeless warfare.

After the recall of Silas Deane, the business of the embassy devolved chiefly on Franklin, who, indeed, within a year was appointed sole minister, Adams

and Lee being relieved. Besides his continuous and exhausting labors in procuring money for Congress at home, and for nearly all of its representatives abroad, Franklin was always effecting some good thing for his country. He especially commended to the American authorities the Marquis de la Fayette, then a mere youth, who had offered to give his personal services to the conflict for liberty. This generous and enthusiastic nobleman was a great accession to the American cause, from both a political and a military point of view, and always retained the friendship and confidence of Washington. Franklin rendered important services in securing the amelioration of the condition of American prisoners in England, who theretofore had been treated with great brutality; after years of patient and untiring effort, he so well succeeded that they were now honorably exchanged according to the rules of war. Among the episodes of this period largely due to Franklin's sagacity and monetary aid, was the gallant career of John Paul Jones, a Scotchman by birth, who had entered the American navy as lieutenant, and in one short cruise had taken sixteen British prizes, — the first man to hoist the "Stars and Stripes" on a national vessel. He was also the first to humble the pride of England in its sorest point, since with unparalleled audacity, he had successfully penetrated to the harbor of the town

in which he was born. The "Bon Homme Richard," a large frigate of forty guns, of which, by the aid of Franklin, Jones secured the command, and which he named in honor of "Poor Richard" of the almanac, made his name famous throughout both Europe and America.

The turning-point of the American War was the surrender of Burgoyne, which brought money and men and open aid from France; the decisive event was the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, October 17, 1781, to Washington, commanding the allied French and American forces, with the aid of the French fleet. Although the war was still continued in a half-hearted way, the Cornwallis disaster convinced England of its hopelessness, and led to negotiations for peace. In these the diplomatic talents of Franklin eclipsed his financial abilities. And this was the more remarkable, since he was not trained in the diplomatic school, where dissimulation was the leading peculiarity. He gained his points by frank, straightforward lucidity of statement, and marvellous astuteness, combined with an imperturbable command of his temper. The trained diplomatists of Europe, with their casuistry and lies, found in him their match.

The subjects to be discussed and settled, however, were so vital and important that Congress associated with Franklin, John Adams, minister at the Hague,

and John Jay, then accredited to Madrid. Nothing could be more complicated than the negotiations between the representatives of the different powers. First, there was a compact between the United States and their allies that peace should not be concluded without their common consent, and each power had some selfish aim in view. Then, England and France each sought a separate treaty. In England itself were divided counsels: Fox had France to look after, and Shelburne the United States; and these rival English statesmen were not on good terms with each other. In the solution of the many questions that arose, John Jay displayed masterly ability. He would take nothing for granted, while Franklin reposed the utmost confidence in the Count de Vergennes. Jay soon discovered that the French minister had other interests at heart than those of America alone, — that he had an eye on a large slice of the territories of the United States, — that he wanted some substantial advantage for the ships and men he had furnished. He wanted no spoils, for there were no spoils to divide, but he wanted unexplored territories extending to the Mississippi, which Jay had no idea of granting. There were other points to which Franklin attached but little importance, but which were really essential in the eye of Jay. Among other things the agent of England, a Mr. Oswald, — a man of high

character and courteous bearing,—was empowered to treat with the "Thirteen Colonies," to which Franklin, eager for peace, saw no objection; but Jay declined to sign the preliminaries of peace unless the independence and sovereignty of the "United States" were distinctly acknowledged. At this stage of negotiations John Adams, honest but impetuous and irritable, hastened from the Hague to take part in the negotiations. He sided with Jay, and Franklin had to yield, which he did gracefully, probably attaching but small importance to the matter in question. What mattered it whether the triumphant belligerents were called "Colonies" or "States" so long as they were free? To astute lawyers like Jay and Adams, however, the recognition of the successfully rebellious Colonies as sovereign States was a main point in issue.

From that time, as Franklin suffered from a severe illness, Jay was the life of the negotiations, and the credit is generally given to him for the treaty which followed, and which was hurried through hastily for fear that a change in the British ministry would hazard its success. It came near alienating France, however, since it had been distinctly understood that peace should not be made without the consent of all the contracting powers, and this treaty was made with England alone. Franklin, in the transaction, was the most honest, and Jay the most astute.

Strictly speaking, all these three commissioners rendered important services in their various ways. Franklin's urbanity and frankness, and the high esteem in which he was held both in France and in England, made easy the opening of the negotiations, and he gained a special point in avoiding any agreement of indemnity to American royalists who had suffered in person or property during the war, while he maintained pleasant relations with France when Vergennes was pursuing his selfish policy to prevent the United States from becoming too strong, and when he became indignant that the treaty had been concluded with England irrespective of France. Jay, with keen sagacity, fathomed the schemes of the French minister, and persistently refused to sign a treaty of peace unless it was satisfactory and promised to be permanent and mutually advantageous. Adams was especially acquainted with the fisheries question and its great importance to New England; and he insisted on the right of Americans to fish on the banks of Newfoundland. All three persisted in the free navigation of the Mississippi, which it was the object of Spain to prevent. Great Britain, Spain, and France would have enclosed the United States by territories of their own, and would have made odious commercial restrictions. By the firmness and sagacity of these three diplomatists the United States finally

secured all they wanted and more than they expected. The preliminary articles were signed November 30, 1782, and the final treaties of peace between England, France, and the United States on September 3, 1783.

These negotiations at last having been happily concluded, Franklin wished to return home, but he remained, at the request of Congress, to arrange commercial treaties with the various European nations. Reluctantly at last his request to be relieved was granted, and he left France in July, 1785. Thomas Jefferson was appointed to the position. "You replace Dr. Franklin," said the Count de Vergennes to the new plenipotentiary. "I succeed him," replied Jefferson; "no one can replace him."

Franklin would have been the happiest man in Europe at the conclusion of peace negotiations, but for his increasing bodily infirmities, especially the gout, from which at times he suffered excruciating agonies. He was a universal favorite, admired and honored as one of the most illustrious men living. His house in Paris was the scene of perpetual hospitalities. Among his visitors were the younger Pitt, Wilberforce, Romilly, and a host of other celebrities, French and English, especially eminent scientific men. He was then seventy-eight years of age, but retained all the vivacity of youth. His conversation is said to have been as enchanting as it was instructive. His

wit and humor never ceased to flow. His pregnant sentences were received as oracles. He was a member of the French Academy and attended most of its meetings. He was a regular correspondent of the most learned societies of Europe.

When the time came for him to return home he was too ill to take leave of the king, or even of the minister of foreign affairs. But Louis XVI. ordered one of the royal litters to convey the venerable sufferer to the coast, as he could not bear the motion of a carriage. In his litter, swung between two mules, Franklin slowly made his way to Havre, and thence proceeded to Southampton to embark for America. The long voyage agreed with him, and he arrived in Philadelphia in September, in improved health, after an absence of nine years. No one would have thought him old except in his walk, his feet being tender and swollen with the gout. His voice was still firm, his cheeks were ruddy, his eyes bright, and his spirits high.

Settled in his fine house in Market Street, surrounded by his grandchildren, and idolatrous neighbors and friends, he was a rare exception to the rule that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country. He had fortune, friends, fame, and a numerous family who never disgraced his name. Of all the great actors in the stormy times in which he lived, he

was one of the most fortunate. He had both genius and character which the civilized world appreciated, and so prudent had been his early business life and his later investments, that he left a fortune of about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, — a great sum to accumulate in his times.

The last important service rendered by Franklin to his country was as a member of the memorable convention which gave the Constitution to the American nation in 1787. Of this assembly, in which sat Washington, Hamilton, Madison, Dickinson, Livingstone, Ellsworth, Sherman, and other great men, Franklin was the Nestor, in wisdom as well as years. He was too feeble to take a conspicuous part in the discussions, but his opinions and counsel had great weight whenever he spoke, for his judgment was never clearer than when he had passed fourscore years. The battle of words had to be fought by younger and more vigorous men, of whom, perhaps, Madison was the most prominent. At no time of his life, however, was Franklin a great speaker, except in conversation, but his mind was vigorous to the end.

This fortunate man lived to see the complete triumph of the cause to which he had devoted his public life. He lived also to see the beginning of the French Revolution, to which his writings had contributed. He lived to see the amazing prosperity of his country

when compared with its condition under royal governors. One of his last labors was to write an elaborate address in favor of negro emancipation, and as president of an abolition society to send a petition to Congress to suppress the slave-trade. A few weeks before his death he replied to a letter of President Stiles of Yale College setting forth his theological belief. Had he been more orthodox, he would have been more extolled by those men who controlled the religious opinions of his age.

Franklin died placidly on the 17th of April, 1790, in the eighty-fifth year of his age, and his body was followed to the grave by most of the prominent citizens of Philadelphia in the presence of twenty thousand spectators. James Madison pronounced his eulogy in Congress, and Mirabeau in the French National Assembly, while the most eminent literary men in both Europe and America published elaborate essays on his deeds and fame, recognizing the extent of his knowledge, the breadth of his wisdom, his benevolence, his patriotism, and his moral worth. He modestly claimed to be only a printer, but who, among the great lights of his age, with the exception of Washington, has left a nobler record?

AUTHORITIES.

Mr. James Parton has, I think, written the most interesting and exhaustive life of Franklin, although it is not artistic and is full of unimportant digressions. Sparks has collected most of his writings, which are rather dull reading. The autobiography of Franklin was never finished, — a unique writing, as frank as the "Confessions" of Rousseau. A good biography is the one by Morse, in the series of "American Statesmen" which he is editing. Not a very complimentary view of Franklin is taken by McMaster, in the series of "American Men of Letters." See also Bancroft's "United States."

LXXV.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

1732–1799.

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ONE might shrink from writing on such a subject as General Washington were it not desirable to keep his memory and deeds perpetually fresh in the minds of the people of this great country, of which he is called the Father, — doubtless the most august name in our history, and one of the grandest in the history of the world.

Washington was not, like Franklin, of humble origin; neither can he strictly be classed with those aristocrats who inherited vast landed estates in Virginia during the eighteenth century, and who were ambitious of keeping up the style of living common to wealthy country gentlemen in England at that time. And yet the biographers of Washington trace his family to the knights and squires who held manors by grant of kings and nobles of England, centuries ago. About the middle of the seventeenth century John and Lawrence Washington, two brothers, of a

younger branch of the family, both Cavaliers who had adhered to the fortunes of Charles I., emigrated to Virginia, and purchased extensive estates in Westmoreland County, between the Potomac and the Rappahannock rivers. The grandson of one of these brothers was the father of our hero, and was the owner of a moderate plantation on Bridges Creek, from which he removed, shortly after the birth of his eldest son, George, in 1732, to an estate in Stafford County, opposite Fredericksburg.

It was here that the early years of Washington were passed, in sports and pleasures peculiar to the sons of planters. His education was not entirely neglected, but beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, his youthful attainments were small. In general knowledge he was far behind the sons of wealthy farmers in New England at that time, — certainly far behind Franklin when a mere apprentice to a printer. But he wrote a fair, neat, legible hand, and kept accounts with accuracy. His half-brother Lawrence had married a relative of Lord Fairfax, who had settled in Virginia on the restoration of Charles II. Lawrence was also the owner of the estate of Mount Vernon, on the Potomac, — the wealthiest member of his family, and a prominent member of the Virginia House of Burgesses. Through this fortunate brother, George became intimate with the best families in

Virginia. His associates were gentlemen of position, with whom he hunted and feasted, and with whose sisters he danced, it is said, with uncommon grace.

In person, young Washington was tall, — over six feet and two inches, — his manners easy and dignified, his countenance urbane and intelligent, his health perfect, his habits temperate, his morals irreproachable, and his sentiments lofty. He was a model in all athletic exercises and all manly sports, — strong, muscular, and inured to exposure and fatigue. He was quick and impetuous in temper, a tendency which he early learned to control. He was sullied with none of the vices then so common with the sons of planters, and his character extorted admiration and esteem.

Such a young man of course became a favorite in society. His most marked peculiarities were good sense and the faculty of seeing things as they are without exaggeration. He was truthful, practical, straight-forward, and conscientious, with an uncommon insight into men, and a power of inspiring confidence. I do not read that he was brilliant in conversation, although he had a keen relish for the charms of society, or that he was in any sense learned or original. He had not the qualities to shine as an orator, or a lawyer, or a literary man; neither in any of the learned professions would he have sunk below mediocrity, being industrious, clear-headed, saga-

cious, and able to avail himself of the labors and merits of others. As his letters show, he became a thoroughly well-informed man. In surveying, farming, stock-raising, and military matters he read the best authorities, often sending to London for them. He steadily fitted himself for his life as a country gentleman of Virginia, and doubtless aspired to sit in the House of Burgesses. He never claimed to be a genius, and was always modest and unassuming, with all his self-respect and natural dignity.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the cultivation of tobacco, to which the wealth and enterprise of Virginia were directed, was not as lucrative as it had been, and among the planters, aristocratic as they were in sentiments and habits, there were many who found it difficult to make two ends meet, and some, however disdainful of manual labor, were compelled to be as economical and saving as New England farmers. Their sons found it necessary to enter the learned professions or become men of business, since they could not all own plantations. Washington, whose family was neither rich nor poor, prepared himself for the work of a surveyor, for which he was admirably fitted, by his hardihood, enterprise, and industry.

Lord Fairfax, who had become greatly interested in the youth and had made him a frequent companion, giving him the inestimable advantage of familiar

intercourse with a thoroughbred gentleman of varied accomplishments, in 1748 sent this sixteen-year-old lad to survey his vast estates in the unexplored lands at the base of the Alleghany Mountains. During this rough expedition young Washington was exposed to the hostilities of unfriendly Indians and the fatigues and hardships of the primeval wilderness; but his work was thoroughly and accurately performed, and his courage, boldness, and fidelity attracted the notice of men of influence and rank. Through the influence of his friend Lord Fairfax he was appointed a public surveyor, and for three years he steadfastly pursued this laborious profession.

A voyage to Barbadoes in 1751 cultivated his habits of clear observation, and in 1752 his brother's death imposed on him the responsibility of the estates and the daughter left to his care by his brother Lawrence.

Young Washington had already, through the influence of his brother, been appointed major and adjutant-general of one of the military districts of Virginia. The depredations of the French and Indians on the border had grown into dangerous aggression, and in 1753 Major Washington was sent as a commissioner through the wilderness to the French headquarters in Ohio, to remonstrate. His admirable conduct on this occasion resulted in his appointment as lieutenant-colonel of the Virginia regiment of six companies sent

to the Ohio frontier; and in this campaign Washington gained new laurels, surprising and defeating the French. His native and acquired powers and his varied experience in Indian warfare now marked him out as a suitable aid to the British General Braddock, who, early in 1755, arrived with two regiments of English soldiers to operate against the French and Indians. This was the beginning of the memorable Seven Years' War.

Washington was now a young man of twenty-three, full of manly vigor and the spirit of adventure, brave as a lion, — a natural fighter, but prudent and far-seeing. He fortunately and almost alone escaped being wounded in the disastrous campaign which the British general lost through his own obstinacy and self-confidence, by taking no advice from those used to Indian warfare. Braddock insisted upon fighting foes concealed behind trees, as if he were in the open field. After the English general's inglorious defeat and death, Washington continued in active service as commander of the Virginia forces for two years, until toil, exposure, and hardship produced an illness which compelled him to withdraw for several months from active service. When at the close of the war he returned to private life, Colonel Washington had won a name as the most efficient commander in the whole conflict, displaying marvellous resources in the con-

stant perils to which he was exposed. Among his exploits was the capture of Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh, in 1758, which terminated the French domination of the Ohio, and opened up Western Pennsylvania to enterprising immigrants. For his rare services this young man of twenty-six received the thanks of the House of Burgesses, of which he had been elected a member at the close of the war. When he entered that body to take his place, the welcome extended to him was so overwhelming that he stood silent and abashed. But the venerable Speaker of the House exclaimed, "Sit down, Mr. Washington; your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

Meanwhile, Mount Vernon, a domain which extended ten miles along the Potomac River, fell into Washington's possession by the death of his brother Lawrence's daughter, which made him one of the richest planters in Virginia. And his fortunes were still further advanced by his marriage in 1759 with the richest woman in the region, Martha, the widow of Daniel Parke Custis. This lady esteemed his character as much as Kadijah revered Mohammed, to say nothing of her admiration for his manly beauty and military renown. His style of life as the lord of Mount Vernon was almost baronial. He had a chariot and four, with black postilions in livery, for the

use of his wife, while he himself always appeared on horseback, the finest rider in Virginia. His house was filled with aristocratic visitors. He had his stud of the highest breed, his fox hounds, and all the luxuries of a prosperous country gentleman. His kitchens, his smoke-houses, his stables, his stewards, his tobacco-sheds, his fields of wheat and corn, his hundred cows, his vast poultry-yards, his barges, all indicated great wealth, and that generous hospitality which is now a tradition. His time was passed in overseeing his large estate, and in out-of-door sports, following the hounds or fishing, exchanging visits with prominent Virginia families, amusing himself with card-playing, dancing, and the social frivolities of the day. But he neglected no serious affairs; his farm, his stock, the sale of his produce, were all admirably conducted and on a plane of widely recognized honor and integrity. He took great interest in the State at large, explored on foot the Dismal Swamp and projected its draining, made several expeditions up the Potomac and over the mountains, laying out routes for new roads to the Ohio country, gained much influence in the House of Burgesses, and was among the foremost in discussing privately and publicly the relations of the Colonies with the Mother Country.

Thus nine years were passed, in luxury, in friendship, and in the pleasures of a happy, useful life.

What a contrast this life was to that of Samuel Adams in Boston at the same time, — a man too poor to keep a single servant, or to appear in a decent suit of clothes, yet all the while the leader of the Massachusetts bar and legislature and the most brilliant orator in the land!

When the Stamp Act was passed by the infatuated Parliament of Great Britain, Washington was probably the richest man in the country, but as patriotic as Patrick Henry. He deprecated a resort to arms, and desired a reconciliation with England, but was ready to abandon his luxurious life, and buckle on his sword in defence of American liberties. As a member of the first general Congress, although no orator, his voice was heard in favor of freedom at any loss or hazard. He was chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, and did much to organize the defensive operations set on foot. When the battle of Lexington was fought, and it became clear that only the sword could settle the difficulties, Washington, at the nomination of John Adams in the Second Congress, was unanimously chosen commander-in-chief of the American armies. With frank acknowledgment of a doubt whether his abilities and experience were equal to the great trust, and yet without reluctance, he accepted the high and responsible command, pledging the exertion of all his powers, under Providence, to lead the country through

its trials and difficulties. He declined all pay for his services, asking only that Congress would discharge his expenses, of which he would "keep an exact account." And this he did, to the penny.

Doubtless, no man in the Colonies was better fitted for this exalted post. His wealth, his military experience, his social position, his political influence, and his stainless character, exciting veneration without envy, marked out Washington as the leader of the American forces. On the whole, he was the foremost man in all the land for the work to be done. In his youth he had been dashing, adventurous, and courageous almost to rashness; but when the vast responsibilities of general-in-chief in a life-and-death struggle weighed upon his mind his character seemed to be modified, and he became cautious, reticent, prudent, distant, and exceedingly dignified. He allowed no familiarity from the most beloved of his friends and the most faithful of his generals. He stood out apart from men, cold and reserved in manner, though capable of the warmest affections. He seemed conscious of his mission and its obligations, resolved to act from the severest sense of duty, fearless of praise or blame, though not indifferent to either. He had no jealousy of his subordinates. He selected, so far as he was allowed by Congress, the best men for their particular duties, and with almost unerring instinct. So far as he had con-

fidants, they were Greene, the ablest of his generals, and Hamilton, the wisest of his counsellors, — ostensibly his aide-de-camp, but in reality his private secretary, the officer to whom all great men in high position are obliged to confide their political secrets.

Washington was "the embodiment of both virtue and power" in the eyes of his countrymen, who gave him their confidence, and never took it back in the darkest days of their calamities. On the whole, in spite of calumny and envy, no benefactor was ever more fully trusted, — supremely fortunate even amid gloom and public duties. This confidence he strove to merit, as his highest reward.

Such was Washington when, at the age of forty-three, he arrived at Cambridge in Massachusetts, to take command of the American army, a few days after the battle of Bunker Hill, on the 17th June, 1775.

Although the English had been final victors at Bunker Hill, the American militia, behind their intrenchments, under Prescott, had repulsed twice their number of the best soldiers of Europe, and retired at last only for want of ammunition. Washington was far from being discouraged by the defeat. His question and comment show his feeling: "Did the militia fight? Then the liberties of the country are safe." It was his first aim to expel the enemy from Boston,

where they were practically surrounded by the hastily collected militia of New England, full of enthusiasm and confidence in the triumph of their cause. But these forces had been injudiciously placed; they were not properly intrenched; they were imperfectly supplied with arms, ammunition, military stores, uniforms, and everything necessary for an army. There was no commissary department, nor was any department provided with adequate resources. The soldiers were inexperienced, raw sons of farmers and mechanics, led by officers who knew but little of scientific warfare, and numbered less than fifteen thousand effective men. They were undisciplined and full of sectional jealousies, electing, for the most part, their own officers, who were too dependent upon their favor to enforce discipline.

Washington's first task, therefore, was to bring order out of confusion; to change the disposition of the forces; to have their positions adequately fortified; to effect military discipline, and subordination of men to their officers; to cultivate a large and general patriotism, which should override all distinctions between the Colonies. This work went on rapidly; but the lack of supplies became distressing. At the close of July the men had but nine rounds of ammunition each, and more was nowhere to be procured. It was necessary to send messengers into almost

every town to beg for powder, and there were few mills in the country to manufacture it.

As the winter approached a new trouble appeared. The brief enlistment terms of many of the men were expiring, and, wearied and discouraged, without proper food or clothing, these men withdrew from the army, and the regiments rapidly decreased in numbers. Recruiting and re-enlisting in the face of such conditions became almost impossible; yet Washington's steady persistence, his letters to Congress, his masterly hold on the siege of the British in Boston, his appeals for men and ammunition, were actually successful. His army was kept up by new and renewed material. Privateers, sent out by him upon the sea, secured valuable supplies. Henry Knox, a Boston bookseller, whom he had made colonel of artillery and despatched to New York and Ticonderoga, returned to the camps with heavy cannon and ammunition.

The right wing of the American army was stationed at Roxbury, under General Artemas Ward, and the left wing, under Major-General Charles Lee and Brigadier-Generals Greene and Sullivan, at Prospect Hill. The headquarters of Washington were in the centre, at Cambridge, with Generals Putnam and Heath. Lee was not allied with the great Virginia family of that name. He was an Englishman by

birth, somewhat of a military adventurer. Conceited, vain, and disobedient, he afterwards came near wrecking the cause which he had ambitiously embraced. Ward was a native of Massachusetts, a worthy man, but not distinguished for military capacity. Putnam was a gallant hero, taken from the plough, but more fitted to head small expeditions than for patient labor in siege operations, or for commanding a great body of troops.

Meanwhile the British troops, some fifteen thousand veterans, had remained inactive in Boston, under Sir William Howe, who had succeeded Gage, unwilling or unable to disperse the militia who surrounded them, or to prevent the fortification of point after point about the city by the Americans. It became difficult to get provisions. The land side was cut off by the American forces, and the supply-ships from the sea were often wrecked or captured by Washington's privateers. At length the British began to think of evacuating Boston and going to a more important point, since they had ships and the control of the harbor. No progress had been made thus far in the conquest of New England, for it was thought unwise to penetrate into the interior with the forces at command, against the army of Washington with a devoted population to furnish him provisions. Howe could undoubtedly have held the New England capital, but

it was not a great strategic point. What was it to occupy a city at the extreme end of the continent, when the British government expected to hear that the whole country was overrun? At last Washington felt strong enough to use his eight months' preparations for a sudden blow. He seized the heights commanding the city and his intention became evident. The active movements of the Americans towards an attack precipitated Howe's half-formed plan for evacuating the city, and in a single day he and his army sailed away, on March 17, 1776.

Washington made no effort to prevent the embarkation of the British troops, since it freed New England, not again to be the theatre of military operations during the war. It was something to deliver the most populous part of the country from English domination and drive a superior army out of Massachusetts. The wonder is that the disciplined troops under the British generals, with guns and ammunition and ships, should not have dispersed in a few weeks the foes they affected to despise. But Washington had fought the long battle of patience and sagacity until he was ready to strike. Then by one bold, sudden move he held the enemy at his mercy. Howe was out-generalled, and the American remained master of the field. Washington had accomplished his errand in New England. He received the thanks of the Congress,

and with his little army proceeded to New York, where matters urgently demanded attention.

To my mind the most encouraging part of the Revolutionary struggle, until the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, was that period of eight months when the British were cooped up in Boston, surrounded by the Americans, who had plenty of provisions even if they were deficient in military stores; when the Yankees were stimulated to enthusiasm by every influence which could be brought to bear upon them by their families, at no great distance from the seat of war, and when no great calamity had as yet overtaken them.

But here everything like success for two years disappeared, and a gloomy cloud hung over the land, portentous of disasters and dismay. Evils thickened, entirely unexpected, which brought out what was greatest in the character and genius of Washington; for he now was the mainstay of hope. The first patriotic gush of enthusiasm had passed away. War, under the most favorable circumstances, is no play; but under great difficulties, has a dismal and rugged look before which delusions rapidly disappear. England was preparing new and much larger forces. She was vexed, but not discouraged, having unlimited resources for war, — money, credit, and military experience. She proceeded to hire the services of seven-

teen thousand Hessian and other German troops. All Europe looked upon the contest as hopeless on the part of a scattered population, without credit, or money, or military stores, or a settled army, or experienced generals, or a central power. Washington saw on every hand dissensions, jealousies, abortive attempts to raise men, a Congress without power and without prestige, State legislatures inefficient and timid, desertions without number and without redress, men returning to their farms either disgusted or feeling that there was no longer a pressing need of their services.

There were, moreover, jealousies among his generals, and suppressed hostility to him, as an aristocrat, a slaveholder, and an Episcopalian.

As soon as Boston was evacuated General Howe sailed for Halifax, to meet his brother, Admiral Howe, with reinforcements for New York. Washington divined his purpose and made all haste. When he reached New York, on the 13th of April, he found even greater difficulties to contend with than had annoyed him in Boston: raw troops, undisciplined and undrilled, a hostile Tory population, conspiracies to take his life, sectional jealousies, — and always a divided Congress, and the want of experienced generals. There was nothing of that inspiring enthusiasm which animated

the New England farmers after the battle of Bunker Hill.

Washington held New York, and the British fleet were masters of the Bay. He might have withdrawn his forces in safety, but so important a place could not be abandoned without a struggle. Therefore, although he had but eight thousand effective men, he fortified as well as he could the heights on Manhattan Island, to the north, and on Long Island, to the south and east, and held his place.

Meantime Washington was laboring to strengthen his army, to suppress the mischievous powers of the Tories, to procure the establishment by Congress of a War Office and some permanent army organization, to quiet jealousies among his troops, and to provide for their wants. In June Sir William Howe arrived in New York harbor and landed forces on Staten Island, his brother the admiral being not far behind. News of disaster from a bold but futile expedition to Canada in the North, and of the coming from the South of Sir Henry Clinton, beaten off from Charleston, made the clouds thicken, when on July 2 the Congress resolved that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States," and on July 4 adopted the formal Declaration of Independence, — an immense relief to the heart and mind of Washington, and one which he joyfully proclaimed to his army.

Even then, however, and although his forces had been reinforced to fifteen thousand serviceable troops and five thousand of raw militia, there was reason to fear that the British, with their thirty-five thousand men and strong naval force, would surround and capture the whole American army. At last they did outflank the American forces on Long Island, and, pouring in upon them a vastly superior force, defeated them with great slaughter.

While the British waited at night for their ships to come up, Washington with admirable quickness seized the single chance of escape, and under cover of a fog withdrew his nine thousand men from Long Island and landed them in New York once more.

This retreat of Washington, when he was to all appearances in the power of the English generals, was masterly. In two short weeks thereafter the British had sent ships and troops up both the Hudson and East rivers, and New York was no longer tenable to Washington. He made his way up the Harlem River, where he was joined by Putnam, who also had contrived to escape with four thousand men, and strongly intrenched himself at King's Bridge.

Washington waited a few days at Harlem Plains planning a descent on Long Island, and resolved on making a desperate stand. Meanwhile Howe, in his ships, passed the forts on the Hudson and landed

at Throg's Neck, on the Sound, with a view of attacking the American intrenchments in the rear and cutting them off from New England. A brief delay on Howe's part enabled Washington to withdraw to a still stronger position on the hills; whereupon Howe retired to Dobbs' Ferry, unable to entrap with his larger forces the wary Washington, but having now the complete command of the lower Hudson.

There were, however, two strong fortresses on the Hudson which Congress was anxious to retain at any cost, a few miles above New York, Fort Washington, on Manhattan Island, and Fort Lee, on the New Jersey side of the river. These forts Howe resolved to capture. The commander-in-chief was in favor of evacuating them, but Greene, who commanded at Fort Washington, thought he was strong enough to defend it. He made a noble defence, but was overwhelmed by vastly superior forces and was compelled to surrender it, with more than two thousand men. And, as Lord Cornwallis with six thousand men then crossed the Hudson, Washington rapidly retreated into New Jersey with a dispirited army, that included the little garrison of Fort Lee which had escaped in safety; and even this small army was fast becoming smaller, from expiring enlistments and other causes. General Lee, with a considerable division at North Castle, N. J., was ordered to rejoin his commander, but, apparently

from ambition for independent command, disobeyed the order. From that moment Washington distrusted Lee, who henceforth was his *bête noir*, who foiled his plans and was jealous of his ascendency. Lee's obstinacy was punished by his being overtaken and captured by the enemy.

Then followed a most gloomy period. We see Washington, with only the shadow of an army, compelled to retreat southward in New Jersey, hotly pursued by the well-equipped British, — almost a fugitive, like David fleeing from the hand of Saul. He dared not risk an engagement against greatly superior forces in pursuit, triumphant and confident of success, while his followers were half clad, without shoes, hungry, homesick, and forlorn. So confident was Howe of crushing the only army opposed to him, that he neglected opportunities and made mistakes. At last the remnant of Lee's troops, commanded by Sullivan and Gates, joined Washington; but even with this reinforcement, giving him barely three thousand men, he could not face the enemy, more than double the number of his inexperienced soldiers. The only thing to do was to put the Delaware between himself and Howe's army. But it was already winter, and the Delaware was full of ice. Cornwallis, a general of great ability, felt sure that the dispirited men who still adhered to Washington could not possibly escape him; so he

lingered in his march, — a fatal confidence, for, when he arrived at the Delaware, Washington was already safely encamped on the opposite bank; nor could he pursue, since all the boats on the river for seventy miles were either destroyed or in the hands of Washington. This successful retreat from the Hudson over the Delaware was another exhibition of high military qualities, — caution, quick perception, and prompt action.

Washington had now the nucleus of an army and could not be dislodged by the enemy, whose force was only about double his own. Howe was apparently satisfied with driving the American forces out of New Jersey, and, retaining his hold at certain points, sent the bulk of his army back to New York.

The aim of Washington was now to expel the British troops from New Jersey. It was almost a forlorn hope, but he never despaired. His condition was not more hopeless than that of William the Silent when he encountered the overwhelming armies of Spain. Always beaten, the heroic Prince of Orange still held out when Holland was completely overrun. But the United States were not overrun. New England was practically safe, although the British held Newport; and all the country south of the Delaware was free from them. The perplexities and discouragements of Washington were great in-

deed, while he stubbornly held the field with a beggarly makeshift for an army and sturdily continued his appeals to Congress and to the country for men, arms, and clothing; yet only New York City and New Jersey were really in the possession of the enemy. It was one thing for England to occupy a few cities, and quite another to conquer a continent; hence Congress and the leaders of the rebellion never lost hope. So long as there were men left in peaceable possession of their farms from Maine to Georgia, and these men accustomed to fire-arms and resolved on freedom, there was no real cause of despair. The perplexing and discouraging things were that the men preferred the safety and comfort of their homes to the dangers and hardships of the camp, and that there was no money in the treasury to pay the troops, nor credit on which to raise it. Hence desertions, raggedness, discontent, suffering; but not despair, — even in the breast of Washington, who realized the difficulties as none else did. Men would not enlist unless they were paid and fed, clothed and properly armed. Had there been an overwhelming danger they probably would have rallied, as the Dutch did when they opened their dikes, or as the Greeks rallied in their late Revolution when fortress after fortress fell into the hands of the Turks, and as the American militia did in successive localities threatened by the British, — notably in

New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, when they swarmed about Burgoyne and captured him at Saratoga. But this was by no means the same as enlisting for a long period in a general army.

I mention these things, not to discredit the bravery and patriotism of the Revolutionary soldiers. They made noble sacrifices and they fought gallantly, but they did not rise above local patriotism and sustain the Continental cause. Yet at no time, even when Washington with his small army was flying before Cornwallis across New Jersey, were there grounds of despair. There were discouragements, difficulties, and vexations; and these could be traced chiefly to the want of a strong central government. The government was divided against itself, without money or credit, — in short, a mere advisory board of civilians, half the time opposed to the plans of the commander-in-chief. But when Washington had been driven beyond the Delaware, when Philadelphia, where Congress was sitting, was in danger, then dictatorial powers were virtually conferred on Washington, — "the most unlimited authority" was the phrase used, — and he had scope to act as he saw fit.

Washington was, it is true, at times accused of incompetency, and traitors slandered him, but Congress stood by him and the country had confidence in him; as well it might, since, while he had not gained great

victories, and even perhaps had made military mistakes, he had delivered Boston, had rescued the remnant of his army from the clutches of Howe and Cornwallis, and had devoted himself by day and night to labors which should never have been demanded of him, in keeping Congress up to the mark, as well as in his arduous duties in the field, — evincing great prudence, sagacity, watchfulness, and energy. He had proved himself at least to be a Fabius, if he was not a Hannibal. But a Hannibal is not possible without an army, and a steady-handed Fabius was the need of the times. The Cæsars of the world are few, and most of them have been unfaithful to their trust, but no one doubted the integrity and patriotism of Washington. Rival generals may have disliked his austere dignity and proud self-consciousness, but the people and the soldiers adored him; and while his general policy was, and had to be, a defensive one, everybody knew that he would fight if he had any hope of success. No one in the army was braver than he, as proved not only by his early warfare against the French and Indians, but also by his whole career after he was selected for the chief command, whenever a fair fighting opportunity was presented, as seen in the following instance.

With his small army on the right bank of the Delaware, toilsomely increased to about four thousand

men, he now meditated offensive operations against the unsuspecting British, who had but just chased him out of New Jersey. Accordingly, with unexpected audacity, on Christmas night he recrossed the Delaware, marched nine miles and attacked the British troops posted at Trenton. It was not a formal battle, but a raid, and proved successful. The enemy, amazed, retreated; then with fresh reinforcements they turned upon Washington; he evaded them, and on January 3, 1777, made a fierce attack on their lines at Princeton, attended with the same success, utterly routing the British. These were small victories, but they encouraged the troops, aroused the New Jersey men to enthusiasm, and alarmed Cornwallis, who retreated northward to New Brunswick, to save his military stores. In a few days the English retained only that town, Amboy, and Paulus Hook, in all New Jersey. Thus in three weeks, in the midst of winter, Washington had won two fights, taken two thousand prisoners, and was as strong as he was before he crossed the Hudson, — and the winter of 1777 opened with hope in the Revolutionary ranks.

Washington then intrenched himself at Morristown and watched the forces of the English generals; and for six months nothing of consequence was done by either side. It became evident that Washington could not be conquered except by large reinforcements

to the army of Howe. Another campaign was a necessity, to the disgust and humiliation of the British government and the wrath of George III. The Declaration of Independence, thus far, had not proved mere rhetoric.

The expulsion of the British troops from New Jersey by inferior forces was regarded in Europe as a great achievement, and enabled Franklin at Paris to secure substantial but at first secret aid from the French Government. National independence now seemed to be a probability, and perhaps a certainty. It was undoubtedly a great encouragement to the struggling States. The more foresighted of British statesmen saw now the hopelessness of a conflict which had lasted nearly two years, and in which nothing more substantial had been gained by the English generals than the occupation of New York and a few towns on the coast, while the Americans had gained military experience and considerable prestige. The whole civilized world pronounced Washington to be both a hero and a patriot.

But the English government, with singular obstinacy, under the lash of George III., resolved to make renewed efforts, to send to America all the forces which could be raised, at a vast expense, and to plan a campaign which should bring the rebels to obedience. The plan was to send an army by way of Canada to

take the fortresses on Lake Champlain, and then to descend the Hudson, and co-operate with Howe in cutting off New England from the rest of the country; in fact, dividing the land in twain, — a plan seemingly feasible. It would be possible to conquer each section, east and south of New York, in detail, with victorious and overwhelming forces. This was the great danger that menaced the States and caused the deepest solicitude.

So soon as the designs of the British government were known, it became the aim and duty of the commander-in-chief to guard against them. The military preparations of Congress were utterly inadequate for the crisis, in spite of the constant and urgent expostulations of Washington. There was, as yet, no regular army, and the militia shamefully deserted. There was even a prejudice against a standing army, and the militia of every State were jealous of the militia of other States. Congress passed resolutions, and a large force was created on paper. Popular enthusiasm was passing away in the absence of immediate dangers; so that, despite the glorious success in New Jersey, the winter of 1777 was passed gloomily, and in the spring new perils arose. But for the negligence of General Howe, the well-planned British expedition from the North might have succeeded. It was under the command of an able and experienced

veteran, General Burgoyne. There was apparently nothing to prevent the junction of the forces of Howe and Burgoyne but the fortress of West Point, which commanded the Hudson River. To oppose this movement Benedict Arnold — "the bravest of the brave," as he was called, like Marshal Ney — was selected, assisted by General Schuyler, a high-minded gentleman and patriot, but as a soldier more respectable than able, and Horatio Gates, a soldier of fortune, who was jealous of Washington, and who, like Lee, made great pretensions, — both Englishmen by birth. The spring and summer resulted in many reverses in the North, where Schuyler was unable to cope with Burgoyne; and had Howe promptly co-operated, that campaign would have been a great triumph for the British.

It was the object of Howe to deceive Washington, if possible, and hence he sent a large part of his army on board the fleet at New York, under the command of Cornwallis, as if Boston were his destination. He intended, however, to capture Philadelphia, the seat of the "rebel Congress," with his main force, while other troops were to co-operate with Burgoyne. Washington, divining the intentions of Howe, with his ragged army crossed the Delaware once more, at the end of July, this time to protect Philadelphia, leaving Arnold and Schuyler to watch Burgoyne, and

Putnam to defend the Hudson. When, late in August, Howe landed his forces below Philadelphia, Washington made up his mind to risk a battle, and chose a good position on the heights near the Brandywine; but in the engagement of September 11 was defeated, through the negligence of Sullivan to guard the fords above against the overwhelming forces of Cornwallis, who was in immediate command. Still, he rallied his army with the view of fighting again. The battle of Germantown, October 5, resulted in American defeat and the occupation by the British of Philadelphia, — a place desirable only for comfortable winter quarters. When Franklin heard of it he coolly remarked that the British had not taken Philadelphia, but Philadelphia had taken them, since seventeen thousand veterans were here kept out of the field, when they were needed most on the banks of the Hudson, to join Burgoyne, now on his way to Lake Champlain.

This diversion of the main army of Howe to occupy Philadelphia was the great British blunder of the war. It enabled the Vermont and New Hampshire militia to throw obstacles in the march of Burgoyne, who became entangled in the forests of northern New York, with his flank and rear exposed to the sharpshooters of the enemy, fully alive to the dangers which menaced them. Sluggish as they were, and

averse to enlistment, the New England troops always rallied when pressing necessity stared them in the face, and fought with tenacious courage. Although Burgoyne had taken Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain, as was to be expected, he was, after a most trying campaign, at last surrounded at Saratoga, and on October 13 was compelled to surrender to the militia he despised. It was not the generalship of the American commander which led to this crushing disaster, but the obstacles of nature, utilized by the hardy American volunteers. Gates, who had superseded Schuyler in the command of the Northern department, claimed the chief merit of the capture of the British army, nearly ten thousand strong; but this claim is now generally disputed, and the success of the campaign is ascribed to Arnold, while that of the final fighting and success is given to Arnold together with Morgan and his Virginia riflemen, whom Washington had sent from his own small force.

The moral and political effect of the surrender of Burgoyne was greater than the military result. The independence of the United States was now assured, not only in the minds of American statesmen, but to European intelligence. The French Government then openly came out with its promised aid, and money was more easily raised.

The influence of Washington in securing the capture of Burgoyne was indirect, although the general plan of campaign and the arousing of the Northern militia had been outlined by him to General Schuyler. He had his hands full in watching Howe's forces at Philadelphia. His defeat at Germantown, the result of accident which he could not prevent, compelled him to retreat to Valley Forge, on the Schuylkill, about nine miles from Philadelphia. There he took up his quarters in the winter of 1777–78. The sufferings of the army in that distressing winter are among the best-known events of the whole war. At Valley Forge the trials of Washington culminated. His army was reduced to three thousand men, incapable of offensive operations, without suitable clothing, food, or shelter.

"As the poor soldiers," says Fiske, in his brilliant history, "marched on the 17th of December to their winter quarters, the route could be traced on the snow by the blood which oozed from bare, frost-bitten feet For want of blankets many were fain to sit up all night by fires. Cold and hunger daily added to the sick list, and men died for want of straw to put between them and the frozen ground."

Gates, instead of marching to the relief of Washington before Philadelphia, as he was ordered, kept his victorious troops idle at Saratoga; and it was only by the extraordinary tact of Alexander Hamilton, the

youthful aid, secretary, and counsellor of Washington, who had been sent North for the purpose, that the return of Morgan with his Virginia riflemen was secured. Congress was shaken by the intrigues of Gates, who sought to supplant the commander-in-chief, and who had won to his support both Morgan and Richard Henry Lee.

At this crisis, Baron Steuben, a Prussian officer who had served under Frederic the Great, arrived at the headquarters of Washington. Some say that he was a mere martinet, but he was exceedingly useful in drilling the American troops, working from morning till night, both patient and laborious. From that time Washington had regular troops, on which he could rely, few in number, but loyal and true. La Fayette also was present in his camp, chivalrous and magnanimous, rendering efficient aid; and there too was Nathaniel Greene of Rhode Island, who had made but one great mistake in his military career, the most able of Washington's generals. With the aid of these trusted lieutenants, Washington was able to keep his little army together, as the nucleus of a greater one, and wait for opportunities, for he loved to fight when he saw a chance of success.

And now it may be said that the desertions which had crippled Washington, the reluctance to enlist on the part of the farmers, and the tardy response to his

calls for money, probably were owing to the general sense of security after the surrender of Burgoyne. It was felt that the cause of liberty was already won. With this feeling men were slow to enlist when they were not sure of their pay, and it was at this period that money was most difficult to be raised. Had there been a strong central government, and not a mere league of States, some Moses would have "smitten the rock of finance," as Hamilton subsequently did, and Chase in the war of the Southern Rebellion, and abundant streams would have gushed forth in the shape of national bonds, certain to be redeemed, sooner or later, in solid gold and silver, and which could have been readily negotiated by the leading bankers of the world. The real difficulty with which Congress and Washington had to contend was a financial one. There were men enough to enlist in the army if they had been promptly paid. Yet, on the other hand, England, with ample means and lavish promises, was able to induce only about three thousand Tories out of all the American population to enlist in her armies in America during the whole war.

By patience unparalleled and efforts unceasing, Washington slowly wrought upon Congress to sustain him in building up a "Continental" army, in place of the shifting bodies of militia. With Steuben as

inspector-general and Greene as quartermaster, the new levies as they came in were disciplined and equipped; and in spite of the conspiracies and cabals formed against him by ambitious subordinates, — which enlisted the aid of many influential men even in Congress, but which came to nought before the solid character and steady front of the man who was really carrying the whole war upon his own shoulders, — Washington emerged from the frightful winter at Valley Forge and entered the spring of 1778 with greater resources at his command than he had ever had before.

In January, 1778, France acknowledged the independence of the United States of America and entered into treaty with them. In the spring Sir William Howe resigned, and Sir Henry Clinton succeeded him in command. After wintering in Philadelphia, the British commander discovered that he could do nothing with his troops shut up in a luxurious city, while Washington was watching him in a strongly intrenched position a few miles distant, and with constantly increasing forces now trained to war; and moreover, a French fleet with reinforcements was now looked for. So he evacuated the Quaker City on the 18th of June, 1778, and began his march to New York, followed by Washington with an army now equal to his own. On the 27th of June Cornwallis

was encamped near Monmouth, N. J., where was fought the most brilliant battle of the war, which Washington nearly lost, nevertheless, by the disobedience of Lee, his second in command, at a critical moment. Boiling with rage, the commander-in-chief rode up to Lee and demanded why he had disobeyed orders. Then, it is said, with a tremendous oath he sent the marplot to the rear, and Lee's military career ignominiously ended. Four years after, this military adventurer, who had given so much trouble, died in a mean tavern in Philadelphia, disgraced, unpitied, and forlorn.

The battle of Monmouth did not prevent the orderly retreat of the British to New York, when Washington resumed his old post at White Plains, east of the Hudson in Westchester County, whence he had some hopes of moving on New York, with the aid of the French fleet under the Count d'Estaing. But the big French ships could not cross the bar, so the fleet sailed for Newport with a view of recapturing that town and repossessing Rhode Island. Washington sent Greene and La Fayette thither with reinforcements for Sullivan, who was in command. The enterprise failed from an unexpected storm in November, which compelled the French admiral to sail to Boston to refit, after which he proceeded to the West Indies. It would appear that the French, thus far, sought to

embarrass the English rather than to assist the Americans. The only good that resulted from the appearance of D'Estaing at Newport was the withdrawal of the British troops to New York.

It is singular that the positions of the opposing armies were very much as they had been two years before. The headquarters of Washington were at White Plains, on the Hudson, and those of Clinton at New York, commanding the harbor and the neighboring heights. Neither army was strong enough for offensive operations with any reasonable hope of success, and the commanding generals seem to have acted on the maxim that "discretion is the better part of valor." Both armies had been strongly reinforced, and the opposing generals did little else than fortify their positions and watch each other. A year passed in virtual inaction on both sides, except that the British carried on a series of devastating predatory raids in New England along the coast of Long Island Sound, in New York State (with the savage aid of the Indians), in New Jersey, and in the South, — there making a more formal movement and seizing the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. No battles of any account were fought. There was some skirmishing, but no important military movements were made on either side. Washington, in December, 1778, removed his headquarters to Middlebrook, N. J.,

his forces being distributed in a series of camps from the Delaware north and east to Rhode Island. The winter he passed in patient vigilance; he wrote expostulating letters to Congress, and even went personally to Philadelphia to labor with its members. Meanwhile Clinton was taking his ease, to the disgust of the British government.

There was a cavilling, criticising spirit among the different parties in America; for there were many who did not comprehend the situation, and who were disappointed that nothing decisive was done. Washington was infinitely annoyed at the stream of detraction which flowed from discontented officers, and civilians in power, but held his soul in patience, rarely taking any notice of the innumerable slanders and hostile insinuations. He held together his army, now chiefly composed of veterans, and nearly as numerous as the troops of the enemy. One thing he saw clearly, — that the maintenance of an army in the field, held together by discipline, was of more importance, from a military point of view, than the occupation of a large city or annoying raids of destruction. While he was well intrenched in a strong position, and therefore safe, the British had the command of the Hudson, and ships-of-war could ascend the river unmolested as far as West Point, which was still held by the Americans and was impregnable. Outside of New

York the British did not possess a strong fortress in the country, at least in the interior, except on Lake Champlain, — not one in New England. West Point, therefore, was a great eyesore to the English generals and admirals. Its possession would be of incalculable advantage in case any expedition was sent to the North.

And the enemy came very near getting possession of this important fortress, not by force, but by treachery. Benedict Arnold, disappointed in his military prospects, alienated from his cause, overwhelmed with debts, and utterly discontented and demoralized, had asked to be ordered from Philadelphia and put in command of West Point. He was sent there in August, 1780. He was a capable and brave man; he had the confidence of Washington, in spite of his defects of character, and moreover he had rendered important services. In an evil hour he lost his head and listened to the voice of the tempter, and having succeeded in getting himself put in charge of the stronghold of the Hudson, he secretly negotiated with Clinton for its surrender.

Everybody is familiar with the details of that infamy, which is inexplicable on any other ground than partial insanity. No matter what may be said in extenuation, Arnold committed the greatest crime known to civilized nations. He contrived to escape

the just doom which awaited him, and, from having become traitor, even proceeded to enter the active service of the enemy and to raise his hand against the country which, but for these crimes, would have held him in honorable remembrance. The heart of English-speaking nations has ever been moved to compassion for the unfortunate fate of the messenger who conducted the treasonable correspondence between Arnold and Clinton, — one of the most accomplished officers in the British army, Major André. No influence — not even his deeply moved sympathy — could induce Washington to interfere with the decision of the court-martial that André should be hanged as a spy, so dangerous did the commander deem the attempted treachery. The English have erected to the unfortunate officer a monument in Westminster Abbey.

The contemplated surrender of West Point to the enemy suggests the demoralization which the war had already produced, and which was deplored by no one more bitterly than by Washington himself. "If I were called upon," he writes, "to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen, heard, and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation, and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them; that speculation, peculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches

seem to have got the better of every other consideration . . .; that party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day; whilst the momentous concerns of an empire, an accumulating debt, ruined finances, depreciated money, and want of credit . . . are but secondary considerations."

All war produces naturally and logically this demoralization, especially in countries under a republican government. Profanity, drunkenness, and general recklessness as to money matters were everywhere prevailing vices; and this demoralization was, in the eyes of Washington, more to be dreaded than any external dangers that had thus far caused alarm and distress. "I have," wrote he, "seen without despondency even for a moment, the hours which America has styled her gloomy ones; but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities that I have thought her liberties were in such imminent danger as at present."

"He had faced," says Henry Cabot Lodge, in his interesting life of Washington, "the enemy, the bleak winters, raw soldiers, and all the difficulties of impecunious government, with a cheerful courage that never failed. But the spectacle of wide-spread popular demoralization, of selfish scramble for plunder, and of feeble administration at the centre of government, weighed upon him heavily." And all this at

the period of the French alliance, which it was thought would soon end the war. Indeed, hostilities were practically over at the North, and hence the public lassitude. Nearly two years had passed without an important battle.

When Clinton saw that no hope remained of subduing the Americans, the British government should have made peace and recognized the independence of the States. But the obstinacy of the king of England was phenomenal, and his ministers were infatuated. They could not reconcile themselves to the greatness of their loss. Their hatred of the rebels was too bitter for reason to conquer. Hitherto the contest had not been bloody nor cruel. Few atrocities had been committed, except by the rancorous Tories, who slaughtered and burned without pity, and by the Indians who were paid by the British government. Prisoners, on the whole, had been humanely treated by both the contending armies, although the British prison-ships of New York and their "thousand martyrs" have left a dark shadow on the annals of the time. Neither in Boston nor New York nor Philadelphia had the inhabitants uttered loud complaints against the soldiers who had successively occupied their houses, and who had lived as comfortably and peaceably as soldiers in English garrison towns. Some villages had been burned, but few people had been

massacred. More inhumanity was exhibited by both Greeks and Turks in the Greek Revolution in one month than by the forces engaged during the whole American war. The prime minister of England, Lord North, was the most amiable and gentle of men. The brothers Howe would fain have carried the olive-branch in one hand while they bore arms in the other. It seemed to be the policy of England to do nothing which would inflame animosities, and prevent the speedy restoration of peace. Spies of course were hanged, and traitors were shot, in accordance with the uniform rules of war. I do not read of a bloodthirsty English general in the whole course of the war, like those Russian generals who overwhelmed the Poles; nor did the English generals seem to be really in earnest, or they would have been bolder in their operations, and would not have been contented to be shut up for two years in New York when they were not besieged.

At length Clinton saw he must do something to satisfy the government at home, and the government felt that a severer policy should be introduced into warlike operations. Clinton perceived that he could not penetrate into New England, even if he could occupy the maritime cities. He could not ascend the Hudson. He could not retain New Jersey. But the South was open to his armies, and had not been seriously invaded.

As Washington personally was not engaged in the military operations at the South, I can make only a passing allusion to them. It is not my object to write a history of the war, but merely to sketch it so far as Washington was directly concerned. The South was left, in the main, to defend itself against the raids which the British generals made in its defenceless territories, and these were destructive and cruel. But Gates was sent to cope with Cornwallis and Tarleton. Washington himself could not leave his position near New York, as he had to watch Clinton, defend the Hudson, and make journeys to Philadelphia to urge Congress to more vigorous measures. Congress, however, was helpless and the State governments were inactive.

In the mean time, early in June, 1780, Charleston, S. C., was abandoned to the enemy, — General Lincoln, who commanded, finding it indefensible. In September the news came North of the battle of Camden and the defeat of Gates, who showed an incompetency equal to his self-sufficiency, and Congress was obliged to remove him. Through Washington's influence, in December, 1780, Greene was appointed to succeed him; had the chief's advice been followed earlier he would have been sent originally instead of Gates. Greene turned the tide, and began those masterly operations which led to the final expulsion of the

English from the South, and, under the guiding mind and firm hand of Washington, to the surrender of Cornwallis.

On January 17, 1781, Morgan won a brilliant victory at Cowpens, S. C., which seriously embarrassed Cornwallis; and then succeeded a vigorous campaign between Cornwallis and Greene for several months, over the Carolinas and the borders of Virginia. The losses of the British were so great, even when they had the advantage, that Cornwallis turned his face to the North, with a view of transferring the seat of war to Chesapeake Bay. Washington then sent all the troops he could spare to Virginia, under La Fayette. He was further aided by the French fleet, under De Grasse, whom he persuaded to sail to the Chesapeake. La Fayette here did good service, following closely the retreating army. Clinton failed to reinforce Cornwallis, some say from jealousy, so that the latter felt obliged to fortify himself at Yorktown. Washington, who had been planning an attack on New York, now continued his apparent preparations, to deceive Clinton, but crossed the Hudson on the 23d of August, to co-operate with the French fleet and three thousand French troops in Virginia, to support La Fayette. He rapidly moved his available force by swift marches across New Jersey to Elkton, Maryland, at the head of Chesapeake Bay. The

Northern troops were brought down the Chesapeake in transports, gathered by great exertions, and on September 28 landed at Williamsburg, on the Yorktown Peninsula. Cornwallis was now hemmed in by the combined French and American armies. Had he possessed the control of the sea he might have escaped, but as the fleet commanded the Chesapeake this was impossible. He had well fortified himself, however, and on the 5th of October the siege of Yorktown began, followed on the 14th by an assault. On the 17th of October, 1781, Cornwallis was compelled to surrender, with seven thousand troops. The besieging army numbered about five thousand French and eleven thousand Americans. The success of Washington was owing to the rapidity of his movements, and the influence which, with La Fayette, he brought to bear for the retention at this critical time and place of the fleet of the Count de Grasse, who was disposed to sail to the West Indies, as D'Estaing had done the year before. Washington's keen perception of the military situation, energetic promptness of action, and his diplomatic tact and address in this whole affair were remarkable.

The surrender of Cornwallis virtually closed the war. The swift concentration of forces from North and South was due to Washington's foresight and splendid energy, while its success was mainly due to

the French, without whose aid the campaign could not have been concluded.

The moral and political effect of this "crowning mercy" was prodigious. In England it broke up the ministry of Lord North, and made the English nation eager for peace, although it was a year or two before hostilities ceased, and it was not until September 3, 1783, that the treaty was signed which Franklin, Adams, and Jay had so adroitly negotiated. The English king would have continued the contest against all hope, encouraged by the possession of New York and Charleston, but his personal government practically ceased with the acknowledgment of American independence.

The trials of Washington, however, did not end with the great victory at Yorktown. There was a serious mutiny in the army which required all his tact to quell, arising from the neglect of Congress to pay the troops. There was greater looseness of morals throughout the country than has been generally dreamed of. I apprehend that farmers and mechanics were more profane, and drank, *per capita*, more cider and rum for twenty years succeeding the war than at any other period in our history. It was then that it was intimated to Washington, in a letter from his friend Colonel Louis Nicola, that the state of the country and the impotence of Congress

made it desirable that he should seize the government, and, supported by the army, turn all the confusion into order, — which probably would have been easy for him to do, and which would have been justified by most historical writers. But Washington repelled the idea with indignation, both for himself and the army; and not only on this occasion but on others when disaffection was rife, he utilized his own popularity to arouse anew the loyalty of the sorely tried patriots, his companions in arms. Many are the precedents of usurpation on the part of successful generals, and few indeed are those who have voluntarily abdicated power from lofty and patriotic motives. It was this virtual abdication which made so profound an impression on the European world, — even more profound than was created by the military skill which Washington displayed in the long war of seven years. It was a rare instance of magnanimity and absence of ambition which was not without its influence on the destinies of America, making it almost impossible for any future general to retain power after his work was done, and setting a proud and unique example of the superiority of moral excellence over genius and power.

Washington is venerated not so much for his military genius and success in bringing the war to a triumphant conclusion, as for his patriotism and dis-

interestedness, since such moral worth as his is much rarer and more extraordinary than military fame. Fortunately, his devotion to the ultimate welfare of the country, universally conceded, was supreme wisdom on his part, not only for the land he loved but for himself, and has given him a name which is above every other name in the history of modern times. He was tested, and he turned from the temptation with abhorrence. He might, and he might not, have succeeded in retaining supreme power, — the culmination of human ambition; but he neither sought nor desired it. It was reward enough for him to have the consciousness of virtue, and enjoy the gratitude of his countrymen.

Washington at last persuaded Congress to do justice to the officers and men who had sacrificed so much for their country's independence; in spite of the probability of peace, he was tireless in continuing preparations for effective war. He was of great service to Congress in arranging for the disbandment of the army after the preliminary treaty of peace in March, 1783, and guided by wise counsel the earlier legislation affecting civil matters in the States and on the frontiers. The general army was disbanded November 3; on November 25 the British evacuated New York and the American authorities took possession; on December 4 Washington bade farewell to his assem-

bled officers, and on the 23d he resigned his commission to Congress, — a patriotic and memorable scene. And then he turned to the placidities of domestic life in his home at Mount Vernon.

But this life and this home, so dear to his heart, it was not long permitted him to enjoy. On the formation and adoption of the Federal Constitution, in 1789, he was unanimously chosen to be the first president of the United States.

In a preceding lecture I have already presented the brilliant constellation of statesmen who assembled at Philadelphia to construct the fabric of American liberties. Washington was one of them, but this great work was not even largely his. On June 8, 1783, he had addressed a letter to the governors of all the States, concerning the essential elements of the well-being of the United States, which showed the early, careful, and sound thought he had given to the matter of what he termed "an indissoluble union of the States under one Federal head." But he was not a great talker, or a great writer, or a pre-eminently great political genius. He was a general and administrator rather than an original constructive statesman whose work involved a profound knowledge of law and history. No one man could have done that work; it was the result of the collected wisdom and experience of the nation, — of the

deliberations of the foremost intellects from the different States, — such men as Hamilton, Madison, Wilson, Rutledge, Dickinson, Ellsworth, and others. Jefferson and Adams were absent on diplomatic missions. Franklin was old and gouty. Even Washton did little more than preside over the convention; but he stimulated its members, with imposing dignity and the constant exercise of his pre-eminent personal influence, to union and conciliation.

So I turn to consider the administrations of President Washington, the policy of which, in the main, was the rule of the succeeding presidents, — of Adams and "the Virginia dynasty."

The cabinet which he selected was able and illustrious; especially so were its brightest stars, — Jefferson as Secretary of State, and Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury, to whose opinions the President generally yielded. It was unfortunate that these two great men liked each other so little, and were so jealous of each other's ascendency. But their political ideas diverged in many important points. Hamilton was the champion of Federalism, and Jefferson of States' Rights; the one, politically, was an aristocrat, and the other, though born on a plantation, was a democrat. Washington had to use all his tact to keep these statesmen from an open rupture. Their mutual hostility saddened and perplexed him. He had selected them as the best

men for their respective posts, and in this had made no mistake; but their opposing opinions prevented that cabinet unity so essential in government, and possibly crippled Washington himself. This great country has produced no administration comprising four greater men than President Washington, the general who had led its armies in a desperate war; Vice-President John Adams, the orator who most eloquently defined national rights; Jefferson, the diplomatist who managed foreign relations on the basis of perpetual peace; and Hamilton, the financier who "struck the rock from which flowed the abundant streams of national credit." General Knox, Secretary of War, had not the intellectual calibre of Hamilton and Jefferson, but had proved himself an able soldier and was devoted to his chief. Edmund Randolph, the Attorney-General, was a leading lawyer in Virginia, and belonged to one of its prominent families.

Outside the cabinet, the judiciary had to be filled, and Washington made choice of John Jay as chief-justice of the Supreme Court, — a most admirable appointment, — and associated with him the great lawyers, Wilson of Pennsylvania, Cushing of Massachusetts, Blair of Virginia, Iredell of North Carolina, and Rutledge of South Carolina, — all of whom were distinguished, and all selected for their abilities, without regard to their political opinions.

It is singular that, as this country has advanced in culture and population, the men who have occupied the highest positions have been inferior in genius and fame, — selected, not because they were great, but because they were "available," that is, because they had few enemies, and were supposed to be willing to become the tools of ambitious and scheming politicians, intriguing for party interests and greedy for the spoils of office. Fortunately, or providentially, some of these men have disappointed those who elevated them, and have unexpectedly developed in office both uncommon executive power and still rarer integrity, — reminding us of those popes who have reigned more like foxes and lions than like the asses that before their elevation sometimes they were thought to be.

Trifling as it may seem, the first measure of the new government pertained to the etiquette to be observed at receptions, dinners, etc., in which there was more pomp and ceremony than at the present time. Washington himself made a greater public display, with his chariot and four, than any succeeding president. His receptions were stately. The President stood with dignity, clad in his velvet coat, never shaking hands with any one, however high his rank. He walked between the rows of visitors, pretty much as Napoleon did at the Tuileries, saying a few

words to each; but people of station were more stately and aristocratic in those times than at the present day, even in New England towns. Washington himself was an old-school gentleman of the most formal sort, and, although benevolent in aspect and kindly in manner, was more tenacious of his dignity than great men usually are. This had been notable throughout the war. His most intimate friends and daily associates, his most prominent and trusted generals, patriotic but hot-headed complainants, turbulent malcontents, — all alike found him courteous and considerate, yet hedged about with an impassive dignity that no one ever dared to violate. A superb horseman, a powerful and active swordsman, an unfailing marksman with rifle or pistol, he never made a display of these qualities; but there are many anecdotes of such prowess in sudden emergencies as caused him to be idolized by his companions in arms, while yet their manifestations of feeling were repressed by the veneration imposed upon all by his lofty personal dignity.

Thus also as President. It was no new access of official pomposity, but the man's natural bearing, that maintained a lofty reserve at these public receptions. Possibly, too, he may have felt the necessity of maintaining the prerogative of the Federal head of all these independent, but now united, States. Hence, on his visit to Boston, soon after his inauguration, he was

offended with John Hancock, then governor of Massachusetts, for neglecting to call on him, as etiquette certainly demanded. The pompous, overrated old merchant, rich and luxurious, though a genuine patriot, perhaps thought that Washington would first call on him, as governor of the State; perhaps he was withheld from his official duty by an attack of the gout; but at last he saw the necessity, and was borne on men's shoulders into the presence of the President.

In considering the vital points in the administration of Washington the reader will not expect to find any of the spirited and exciting elements of the Revolutionary period. The organization and ordering of governmental policies is not romantic, but hard, patient, persevering work. All questions were yet unsettled, — at least in domestic matters, such as finance, tariffs, and revenue. One thing is clear enough, that the national debt and the State debts and the foreign debt altogether amounted to about seventy-five million dollars, the interest on which was unpaid by reason of a depleted treasury and want of credit, which produced great financial embarrassments. Then there were grave Indian hostilities demanding a large military force to suppress them, and there was no money to pay the troops. And when Congress finally agreed, in the face of great opposition, to adopt the plans of Hamilton and raise a revenue

by excise on distilled spirits, manufactured chiefly in Pennsylvania, there was a rebellion among the stubborn and warlike Scotch-Irish, who were the principal distillers of whiskey, which required the whole force of the government to put down.

In the matter of revenue, involving the most important of all the problems to be solved, Washington adopted the views of Hamilton, and contented himself with recommending them to Congress, — a body utterly inexperienced, and ignorant of the principles of political economy. Nothing was so unpopular as taxation in any form, and yet without it the government could not be carried on. The Southern States wanted an unrestricted commerce, amounting to "free trade," that they might get all manufactured articles at the smallest possible price; and these came chiefly from abroad. All import duties were an abomination to them, and yet without these a national revenue could not be raised. It is true that Washington had recommended the encouragement of domestic manufactures, the dependdence of country on foreigners for nearly all supplies having been one of the chief difficulties of the war, but the great idea of "protection" had not become a mooted point in national legislation.

Hamilton had further proposed a bank, but this also met with great opposition in Congress among the anti-Federalists and the partisans of Jefferson, fearful

and jealous of a moneyed power. In the end the measures which Hamilton suggested were generally adopted, and the good results were beginning to be seen, but the financial position of the country for several years after the formation of the Federal government was embarrassing, if not alarming.

Again, there was no national capital, and Congress, which had begun its labors in New York, could not agree upon the site, which was finally adopted only by a sort of compromise, — the South accepting the financial scheme of Hamilton if the capital should be located in Southern territory. All the great national issues pertaining to domestic legislation were in embryo, and no settled policy was possible amid so many sectional jealousies.

It was no small task for Washington to steer the ship of state among these breakers. No other man in the nation could have done so well as he, for he was conciliatory and patient, ever ready to listen to reason and get light from any quarter, modest in his recommendations, knowing well that his training had not been in the schools of political economy. His good sense and sterling character enabled him to surmount the difficulties of his situation, which was anything but a bed of roses.

In the infancy of the republic the foreign relations of the government were deemed more important and

excited more interest than internal affairs, and in the management of foreign affairs Jefferson displayed great abilities, which Washington appreciated as much as he did the financial genius of Hamilton. In one thing the President and his Secretary of State were in full accord, — in keeping aloof from the labyrinth of European politics, and maintaining friendly intercourse with all nations. With a peace policy only would commerce thrive and industries be developed. Both Washington and Jefferson were broad-minded enough to see the future greatness of the country, and embraced the most liberal views. Hence the foreign envoys were quietly given to understand that the members of the American government were to be treated with the respect due to the representatives of a free and constantly expanding country, which in time would be as powerful as either England or France.

It was seen, moreover, that both France and England would take every possible advantage of the new republic, and would seek to retain a foothold in the unexplored territories of the Northwest, as well as to gain all they could in commercial transactions. England especially sought to hamper our trade with the West India Islands, and treated our envoys with insolence and coldness. The French sought to entangle the United States in their own revolution, with which most Americans sympathized until its atrocities filled

them with horror and disgust. The English impressed American seamen into their naval service without a shadow of justice or good faith.

In 1795 Jay succeeded in making a treaty with the English government, which was ratified because it was the best he could get, not because it was all that he wished. It bore hard on the cities of the Atlantic coast that had commercial dealings with the West India Islands, and led to popular discontent, and bitter animosity towards England, finally culminating in the war of 1812. The French were equally irritating, and unreasonable in their expectations. The Directory in 1793 sent an arrogant and insulting envoy to the seat of government. "Citizen Genet," as he was called, tried to engage the United States in the French war against England. Although Washington promptly proclaimed neutrality as the American policy, Genet gave no end of trouble and vexation. This upstart paid no attention to the laws, no respect to the constituted authorities, insulted governors and cabinet-ministers alike, insisted on dealing with Congress directly instead of through the Secretary of State, issued letters of marque for privateers against English commerce, and defied the government. He did all that he could to embroil the country in war with Great Britain; and there was a marked division of sentiment among

the people, — the new Democratic-Republican societies, in imitation of the French Jacobin clubs, being potent disseminators of democratic doctrine and sympathy with the French uprising against despotism. The forbearance of Washington, in suffering the irascible and boastful Genet to ride rough-shod over his own cabinet, was extraordinary. In ordinary times the man would have been summarily expelled from the country. At last his insults could no longer be endured and his recall was demanded; but he did not return to France, and, strange to say, settled down as a peaceful citizen in New York. The lenient treatment of this insulting foreigner arose from the reluctance of Washington to loosen the ties which bound the country to France, and from gratitude for the services she had rendered in the war, whatever may have been the motives that had influenced that government to yield assistance.

Washington, who had consented in 1794 to serve a second term as president, now began to weary of the cares of office. The quarrel between Hamilton and Jefferson, leading to the formation of the two great political parties which, under different names, have since divided the nation; the whiskey rebellion in Pennsylvania, which required the whole strength of the government to subdue; the Indian atrocities in the Northwest, resulting in the unfortunate expe-

dition of St. Clair; the opposition to the financial schemes of the Secretary of the Treasury to restore the credit of the country; and the still greater popular disaffection toward Jay's treaty with Great Britain, — these and other annoyances made him long for the quiet life of Mount Vernon; and he would have resigned the presidency in disgust but for patriotic motives and the urgent remonstrances of his cabinet. Faithful to his trust, he patiently labored on. If his administration was not dashingly brilliant, any more than his career as a general, he was beset with difficulties and discouragements which no man could have surmounted more gloriously than he: and when his eight years of service had expired he had the satisfaction to see that the country was at peace with all the world; that his policy of non-interference with European politics was appreciated; that no more dangers were to be feared from the Indians; that the country was being opened for settlers westward to the Ohio River; that the navigation of the Mississippi was free to the Gulf of Mexico; that canals and internal improvements were binding together the different States and introducing general prosperity; that financial difficulties had vanished; and that the independence and assured growth of the nation was no longer a matter of doubt in any European State.

Nothing could induce Washington to serve beyond

his second term. He could easily have been again elected, if he wished, but he longed for rest and the pursuits of agricultural life. So he wrote his Farewell Address to the American people, exhorting them to union and harmony, — a document filled with noble sentiments for the meditation of all future generations. Like all his other writings, it is pregnant with moral wisdom and elevated patriotism, and in language is clear, forcible, and to the point. He did not aim to advance new ideas or brilliant theories, but rather to enforce old and important truths which would reach the heart as well as satisfy the head. The burden of his song in this, and in all his letters and messages and proclamations, is union and devotion to public interests, unswayed by passion or prejudice.

On the 3d of March, 1797, the President gave his farewell dinner to the most distinguished men of the time, and as soon as possible after the inauguration of his successor, John Adams, he set out for his plantation on the banks of the Potomac, where he spent his remaining days in dignity and quiet hospitalities, amid universal regrets that his public career was ended.

Even in his retirement, when there seemed to be imminent danger of war with France, soon after his return to his home, he was ready to buckle on

his sword once more; but the troubles were not so serious as had been feared, and soon blew over. They had arisen from the venality and rapacity of Talleyrand, French minister of Foreign affairs, who demanded a bribe from the American commissioners of two and a half millions as the price of his friendly services in securing favorable settlements. Their scornful reply, and the prompt preparations in America for war, brought the Directory to terms. When the crisis was past Washington resumed the care of his large estates, which had become dilapidated during the fifteen years of his public life. His retreat was invaded by great numbers, who wished to see so illustrious a man, but no one was turned away from his hospitable mansion.

In December, 1799, Washington caught cold from imprudent exposure, and died on the 14th day of the month after a short illness, — not what we should call a very old man. His life might probably have been saved but that, according to the universal custom, he was bled, which took away his vital forces. On the 16th of December he was buried quietly and without parade in the family vault at Mount Vernon, and the whole nation mourned for him as the Israelites mourned for Samuel of old, whom he closely resembled in character and services.

It would be useless to dwell upon the traits of char-

acter which made George Washington a national benefactor and a national idol. But one inquiry is often made, when he is seriously discussed, — whether or no he may be regarded as a man of genius. It is difficult to define genius, which seems to me to be either an abnormal development of particular faculties of mind, or an inspired insight into elemental truths so original and profound that its discoveries pass for revelations. Such genius as this is remarkably rare. I can recall but one statesman in our history who had extraordinary creative power, and this was Hamilton. In the history of modern times we scarcely can enumerate more than a dozen statesmen, a dozen generals, and the same number of poets, philosophers, theologians, historians, and artists who have had this creative power and this divine insight. Washington did not belong to that class of intellects. But he had what is as rare as transcendent genius, — he had a transcendent character, united with a marvellous balance of intellectual qualities, each in itself of a high grade, which gave him almost unerring judgment and remarkable influence over other minds, securing veneration. As a man he had his faults, but they were so few and so small that they seem to be but spots upon a sun. These have been forgotten; and as the ages roll on mankind will see naught but the lustre of his virtues and the greatness of his services.

AUTHORITIES.

The best and latest work on Washington is that of the Hon Henry Cabot Lodge, and leaves little more to be said; Marshall's Washington has long been a standard; Botta's History of the Revolutionary War; Bancroft's United States; McMaster's History of the American People. In connection read the standard lives of Franklin, John Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Jay, Marshall, La Fayette, and Greene, with Washington's writings. John Fiske has written an admirable book on Washington's military career; indeed his historical series on the early history of America and the United States are both brilliant and trustworthy. Of the numerous orations on Washington, perhaps the best is that of Edward Everett.

LXXVI.

JOHN ADAMS.

CONSTRUCTIVE STATESMANSHIP.

1735–1826.

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JOHN ADAMS.

CONSTRUCTIVE STATESMANSHIP.

THE Adams family — on the whole the most illustrious in New England, if we take into view the ability, the patriotism, and the high offices which it has held from the Revolutionary period — cannot be called of patrician descent, neither can it viewed as peculiarly plebeian. The founder was a small farmer in the town of Braintree, of the Massachusetts Colony, as far back as 1636, whose whole property did not amount to £100. His immediate descendants were famous and sturdy Puritans, characterized by their thrift and force of character.

The father of John Adams, who died in 1730, had an estate amounting to nearly £1,500, and could afford to give a college education at Harvard to his eldest son, John, who was graduated in 1755, at the age of twenty, with the reputation of being a good scholar,

but by no means distinguished in his class of twenty-four members. He cared more for rural sports than for books. Following the custom of farmers' sons, on leaving college he kept a school at Worcester before he began his professional studies. His parents wished him to become a minister, but he had no taste for theology, and selected the profession of law.

At that period there were few eminent lawyers in New England, nor was there much need of them, their main business being the collection of debts. They were scarcely politicians, since few political questions were agitated outside of parish disputes. Nor had lawyers opportunities of making fortunes when there were no merchant-princes, no grinding monopolies or large corporations, and no great interest outside of agricultural life; when riches were about equally distributed among farmers, mechanics, sailors, and small traders. Young men contemplating a profession generally studied privately with those who were prominent in their respective callings for two or three years after leaving college, and were easily admitted to the bar, or obtained a license to preach, with little expectation of ever becoming rich except by parsimonious saving.

With our modern views, life in Colonial times naturally seems to have been dull and monotonous, with few amusements and almost no travel, no art, not

many luxuries, and the utter absence of what are called "modern improvements." But if life at that time is more closely scrutinized we find in it all the elements of ordinary pleasure, — the same family ties, the same "loves and wassellings," the same convivial circles, the same aspirations for distinction, as in more favored civilizations. If luxuries were limited, people lived in comfortable houses, sat around their big wood-fires, kept up at small cost, and had all the necessities of life, — warm clothing, even if spun and woven and dyed at home, linen in abundance, fresh meat at most seasons of the year, with the unstinted products of the farm at all seasons, and even tea and coffee, wines and spirits, at moderate cost; so that the New Englanders of the eighteenth century could look back with complacency and gratitude on the days when the Pilgrim Fathers first landed and settled in the dreary wilderness, feeling that the "lines had fallen to them in pleasant places," and yet be unmindful that even the original settlers, with all their discomforts and dangers and privations, enjoyed that inward peace and lofty spiritual life in comparison with which all material luxuries are transient and worthless. It is only the divine certitudes, which can exist under any external circumstances, that are of much account in our estimate of human happiness, and it is these which ordinarily escape the attention of historians

when they paint the condition of society. Our admiration and our pity are alike wasted when we turn our eyes to the outward condition of our rural ancestors, so long as we have reason to believe that their souls were jubilant with the benedictions of Heaven; and this joy of theirs is especially noticeable when they are surrounded with perils and hardships.

Such was the state of society when John Adams appeared on the political stage. There were but few rich men in New England, — like John Hancock and John Langdon, both merchants, — and not many who were very poor. The population consisted generally of well-to-do farmers, shopkeepers, mechanics, and fishermen, with a sprinkling of lawyers and doctors and ministers, most of whom were compelled to practise the severest economy, and all of whom were tolerably educated and familiar with the principles on which their rights and liberties rested. Usually they were law-abiding, liberty-loving citizens, with a profound veneration for religious institutions, and contentment with their lot. There was no hankering for privileges or luxuries which were never enjoyed, and of which they never heard. As we read the histories of cities or states, in antiquity or in modern times, we are struck with their similarity, in all ages and countries, in everything which pertains to domestic pleasures, to religious life, to ordinary passions and

interests, and the joys and sorrows of the soul. Homer and Horace, Chaucer and Shakspeare, dwell on the same things, and appeal to the same sentiments.

So John Adams the orator worked on the same material, substantially, that our orators and statesmen do at the present day, and that all future orators will work upon to the end of time, — on the passions, the interests, and the aspirations which are eternally the same, unless kept down by grinding despotism or besotted ignorance, as in Egypt or mediæval Europe, and even then the voice of humanity finds entrance to the heart and soul. "All men," said Rousseau, "are born equal;" and both Adams and Jefferson built up their system of government upon this equality of rights, if not of condition, and defended it by an appeal to human consciousness, — the same in all ages and countries. In regard to these elemental rights we are no more enlightened now than our fathers were a hundred years ago, except as they were involved in the question of negro slavery. When, therefore, Adams began his career as a political orator, it was of no consequence whether men were rich or poor, or whether the country was advanced or backward in material civilization. He spoke to the heart and the soul of man, as Garrison and Sumner and Lincoln spoke on other issues, but involving the same established principles.

Little could John Adams have divined his own future influence and fame when, as a boy on his father's farm in Braintree, he toiled in rural and commonplace drudgeries, or when he was an undistinguished student at Harvard or a schoolmaster in a country village. It was not until political agitations aroused the public mind that a new field was open to him, congenial to his genius.

Still, even when he boarded with his father, a sturdy Puritan, at the time he began the practice of the law at the age of twenty-three, he had his aspirations. Writes he in his diary, "Chores, chat, tobacco, apples, tea, steal away my time, but I am resolved to translate Justinian;" and yet on his first legal writ he made a failure for lack of concentrated effort. "My thoughts," he said, "are roving from girls to friends, from friends to court, and from court to Greece and Rome," — showing that enthusiastic, versatile temperament which then and afterwards characterized him.

Not long after that, he had given up Justinian. "You may get more by studying town-meetings and training-days," he writes. "Popularity is the way to gain and figure." These extracts give no indication of legal ambition.

But in 1761 the political horizon was overcast. There were difficulties with Great Britain. James

Otis had made a great speech, which Adams heard, on what were called "writs of assistance," giving power to the English officers of customs in the Colony to enter houses and stores to search for smuggled goods. This remarkable speech made a deep impression on the young lawyer, and kindled fires which were never extinguished. He saw injustice, and a violation of the rights of English subjects, as all the Colonists acknowledged themselves to be, and he revolted from injustice and tyranny. This was the turning-point of his life; he became a patriot and politician. This however, was without neglecting his law business, which soon grew upon his hands, for he could make a speech and address juries. Eloquence was his gift. He was a born orator, like Patrick Henry.

In 1765 Parliament passed the Stamp Act, which produced great agitation in New England, and Adams was fired with the prevailing indignation. His whole soul went forth in angry protest. He argued its injustice before Governor Bernard, who, however, was resolved to execute it as the law. Adams was equally resolved to prevent its execution, and appealed to the people in burning words of wrath. Chief-Justice Hutchinson sided with the Governor, and prevented the opening of the courts and all business transactions without stamps. This decision crippled business, and there was great distress on account of it; but

Adams cared less for the injury to people's pockets than for the violation of rights, — *taxation without representation;* and in his voice and that of other impassioned orators this phrase became the key-note of the Revolution.

English taxation of the Colonies was not oppressive, but was felt to be unjust and unconstitutional, — an entering-wedge to future exactions, to which the people were resolved not to submit. They had no idea of separation from England, but, like John Hampden, they would resist an unlawful tax, no matter what the consequences. Fortunately, these consequences were not then foreseen. The opposition of the Colonies to taxation without their own consent was a pure outburst of that spirit of liberty which was born in German forests, and in England grew into Magna Charta, and ripened into the English Revolution. It was a turbulent popular protest. That was all, at first, and John Adams fanned the discontent, with his cousin, Samuel Adams, a greater agitator even than he, resembling Wendell Phillips in his acrimony, boldness, and power of denunciation. The country was aroused from end to end. The "Sons of Liberty" societies of Massachusetts spread to Maryland; the Virginians boldly passed declarations of rights; the merchants of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston resolved to import no English goods; and

nine of the Colonies sent delegates to a protesting Convention in New York. In 1766 the Stamp Act was repealed because it could not be enforced; but Parliament refused to concede its right of taxation, and there was a prospect of more trouble.

John Adams soon passed to the front rank of the patriotic party in Massachusetts. He was eloquent and he was honest. His popularity in Massachusetts Bay was nearly equal to that of Patrick Henry in Virginia, who was even more vehement. The Tories looked upon Adams pretty much as the descendants of the old Federalists looked upon William Lloyd Garrison when he began the anti-slavery agitation, — as a dangerous man, a fanatical reformer. The presence of such a leader was now needed in Boston, and in 1768 Adams removed to that excitable town, which was always ready to adopt progressive views. Soon after, two British regiments landed in the town, and occupied the public buildings with the view of overawing and restraining the citizens, especially in the enforcement of customs duties on certain imported articles. This was a new and worse outrage, but no collision took place between the troops and the people till the memorable "Boston Massacre" on the 5th of March, 1770, when several people were killed and wounded, which increased the popular indignation. It now looked as if the English government

intended to treat the Bostonians as rebels, to coerce them by armed men, to frighten them into submission to all its unwise measures. What a fortunate thing was that infatuation on the part of English ministers! The independence of the Colonies might have been delayed for half a century but for the stupidity and obstinacy of George III. and his advisers.

By this time John Adams began to see the logical issue of English persistency in taxation. He saw that it would lead to war, and he trembled in view of the tremendous consequences of a war with the mother-country, from which the Colonies had not yet sought a separation.

Adams was now not only in the front rank of the patriotic party, a leader of the people, but had reached eminence as a lawyer. He was at the head of the Massachusetts bar. In addition he had become a member of the legislature, second to no one in influence. But his arduous labors told upon his health, and he removed to Braintree, where he lived for some months, riding into Boston every day. With restored health from out-door exercise, he returned again to Boston in 1772, purchased a house in Queen Street, opposite the court-house, and renewed his law business, now grown so large that he resigned his seat in the legislature. Politics, however, absorbed his soul, and stirring times were at hand.

In every seaport — Charleston, Annapolis, Philadelphia, New York, Boston — the people were refusing to receive the newly taxed tea. On the 17th of December, 1773, three shiploads of tea were destroyed in Boston harbor by a number of men dressed as Indians. Adams approved of this bold and defiant act, sure to complicate the relations with Great Britain. In his heart Adams now desired this, as tending to bring about the independence of the Colonies. He believed that the Americans, after ten years of agitation, were strong enough to fight; he wanted no further conciliation. But he did not as yet openly declare his views. In 1774 General Gage was placed at the head of the British military force in Boston, and the port was closed. The legislature, overawed by the troops, removed to Salem, and then chose five men as delegates to the General Congress about to assemble in Philadelphia. John Adams was one of these delegates, and associated with him were Samuel Adams, Thomas Cushing, James Bowdoin, and Robert Treat Paine.

All historians unite in their praises of this memorable assembly, as composed of the picked men of the country. At the meeting of this Congress began the career of John Adams as a statesman. Until then he had been a mere politician, but honest, bold, and talented, in abilities second to no one in the

country, ranking alone with Jefferson in general influence, — certainly the foremost man in Massachusetts.

But it was the vehemence of his patriotism and his inspiring eloquence which brought Adams to the front, rather than his legal reputation. He was not universally admired or loved. He had no tact. His temper was irascible, jealous, and impatient; his manners were cold, like those of all his descendants, and his vanity was inordinate. Every biographer has admitted his egotism, and jealousy even of Franklin and Washington. Everybody had confidence in his honesty, his integrity, his private virtues, his abilities, and patriotism. These exalted traits were no more doubted than the same in Washington. But if he had more brain power than Washington he had not that great leader's prudence, nor good sense, nor patience, nor self-command, nor unerring instinct in judging men and power of guiding them.

One reason, perhaps, why Adams was not so conciliatory as Jefferson was inclined to be toward England was that he had gone too far to be pardoned. He was the most outspoken and violent of all the early leaders of rebellion except his cousin, Samuel Adams. He was detested by royal governors and the English government. But his ardent temperament and his profound convictions furnish a better reason for his course. All the popular leaders were of course

alive to the probable personal consequences if their cause should not succeed; but fear of personal consequences was the feeblest of their motives in persistent efforts for independence. They were inspired by a loftier sentiment than that, even an exalted patriotism. It burned in every speech they made, and in every conversation in which they took part. If they had not the spirit of martyrdom, they had the spirit of self-devotion to a noble cause. They saw clearly enough the sacrifices they would be required to make, and the calamities which would overwhelm the land. But these were nothing to the triumph of their cause. Of this final triumph none of the great leaders of the Revolution doubted. They felt the impossibility of subduing a nation determined to be free, by such forces as England could send across the ocean. Battles might be lost, like those of William the Silent, but if the Dutch could overflow their dikes, the Americans, as a last resort, could seek shelter in their forests. The Americans were surely not behind the Dutch in the capacity of suffering, although to my mind their cause was not so precious as that of the Hollanders, who had not only to fight against overwhelming forces, but to preserve religious as well as civil liberties. The Dutch fought for religion and self-preservation; the Americans, to resist a tax which nearly all England thought it had a right to impose,

and which was by no means burdensome, — a mooted question in the highest courts of law; at bottom, however, it was not so much to resist a tax as to gain national independence that the Americans fought. It was the Anglo-Saxon love of self-government.

And who could blame them for resisting foreign claims to the boundless territories and undeveloped resources of the great country in which they had settled forever? The real motive of the enlightened statesmen of the day was to make the Colonies free from English legislation, English armies, and English governors, that they might develop their civilization in their own way. The people whom they led may have justly feared the suppression of their rights and liberties; but far-sighted statesmen had also other ends in view, not to be talked about in town-meetings or even legislative halls. As Abraham of old cast his inspired vision down the vista of ages and saw his seed multiplying like the sands of the sea, and all the countries and nations of the world gradually blest by the fulfilment of the promise made to him, so the founders of our republic looked beyond the transient sufferings and miseries of a conflict with their mother-country, to the unbounded resources which were sure to be developed on every river and in every valley of the vast wilderness yet to be explored, and to the teeming populations which

were to arise and to be blessed by the enjoyment of those precious privileges and rights for which they were about to take up the sword. They may not have anticipated so rapid a progress in agriculture, in wealth, in manufactures, in science, in literature and art, as has taken place within one hundred years, to the astonishment and admiration of all mankind, but they saw that American progress would be steady, incalculable, immeasurable, unchecked and ever advancing, until their infant country should number more favored people than any nation which history records, unconquerable by any foreign power, and never to pass away except through the prevalence of such vices as destroyed the old Roman world.

With this encouragement, statesmen like Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, were ready to risk everything and make any sacrifice to bring about the triumph of their cause, — a cause infinitely greater than that which was advocated by Pitt, or fought for by Wellington. Their eyes rested on the future of America, and the great men who were yet to be born. They well could say, in the language of an orator more eloquent than any of them, as he stood on Plymouth Rock in 1820: —

"Advance, then, ye future generations! We would hail you, as you rise in your long succession to fill the places which we now fill. . . . We bid you welcome to the

healthy skies and the verdant fields of New England. We greet your accession to the great inheritance which we have enjoyed. We welcome you to the blessings of good government and religious liberty. We welcome you to the treasures of science, and the delights of learning. We welcome you to the transcendent sweets of domestic life, to the happiness of kindred, and parents, and children. We welcome you to the immeasurable blessings of rational existence, the immortal hope of Christianity, and the light of everlasting truth!"

John Adams, whose worth and services Daniel Webster, six years after uttering those words, pointed out in Faneuil Hall when the old statesman died, was probably the most influential member of the Continental Congress, after Washington, since he was its greatest orator and its most impassioned character. He led the Assembly, as Henry Clay afterwards led the Senate, and Canning led the House of Commons, by that inspired logic which few could resist. Jefferson spoke of him as "the colossus of debate." It is the fashion in these prosaic times to undervalue congressional and parliamentary eloquence, as a vain oratorical display; but it is this which has given power to the greatest leaders of mankind in all free governments, — as illustrated by the career of such men as Demosthenes, Pericles, Cicero, Chatham, Fox, Mirabeau, Webster, and Clay; and it is rarely called out except in great national crises, amid the storms

of passion and agitating ideas. Jefferson affected to sneer at it, as exhibited by Patrick Henry; but take away eloquence from his own writings and they would be commonplace. All productions of the human intellect are soon forgotten unless infused with sentiments which reach the heart, or excite attention by vividness of description, or the brilliancy which comes from art or imagination or passion. Who reads a prosaic novel, or a history of dry details, if ever so accurate? How few can listen with interest to a speech of statistical information, if ever so useful, — unless illuminated by the oratorical genius of a Gladstone! True eloquence is a gift, as rare as poetry; an inspiration allied with genius; an electrical power without which few people can be roused, either to reflection or action. This electrical power both the Adamses had, as remarkably as Whitefield or Beecher. No one can tell exactly what it is, whether it is physical, or spiritual, or intellectual; but certain it is that a speaker will not be listened to without it, either in a legislative hall, or in the pulpit, or on the platform. And hence eloquence, wherever displayed, is really a great power, and will remain so to the end of time.

At the first session of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, in 1774, although it was composed of the foremost men in the country, very little was done, except to recommend to the different provinces the

non-importation of British goods, with a view of forcing England into conciliatory measures; at which British statesmen laughed. The only result of this self-denying ordinance was to compel people to wear homespun and forego tea and coffee and other luxuries, while little was gained, except to excite the apprehension of English merchants. Yet this was no small affair in America, for we infer from the letters of John Adams to his wife that the habits of the wealthy citizens of Philadelphia were even then luxurious, much more so than in Boston. We read of a dinner given to Adams and other delegates by a young Quaker lawyer, at which were served ducks, hams, chickens, beef, pig, tarts, cream, custards, jellies, trifles, floating islands, beer, porter, punch, wine, and a long list of other things. All such indulgences, and many others, the earnest men and women of that day undertook to cheerfully deny themselves.

Adams returned these civilities by dining a party on salt fish, — perhaps as a rebuke to the costly entertainments with which he was surfeited, and which seemed to him unseasonable in "times that tried men's souls." But when have Philadelphia Quakers disdained what is called good living?

Adams, at first delighted with the superior men he met, before long was impatient with the deliberations of the Congress, and severely criticised the delegates.

"Every man," wrote he, "upon every occasion must show his oratory, his criticism, and his political abilities. The consequence of this is that business is drawn and spun out to an immeasurable length. I believe, if it was moved and seconded that we should come to a resolution that three and two make five, we should be entertained with logic and rhetoric, law, history, politics, and mathematics; and then — we should pass the resolution unanimously in the affirmative. These great wits, these subtle critics, these refined geniuses, these learned lawyers, these wise statesmen, are so fond of showing their parts and powers as to make their consultations very tedious. Young Ned Rutledge is a perfect bob-o-lincoln, — a swallow, a sparrow, a peacock; excessively vain, excessively weak, and excessively variable and unsteady, jejune, inane, and puerile." Sharp words these! This session of Congress resulted in little else than the interchange of opinions between Northern and Southern statesmen. It was a mere advisory body, useful, however, in preparing the way for a union of the Colonies in the coming contest. It evidently did not "mean business," and "business" was what Adams wanted, rather than a vain display of abilities without any practical purpose.

The second session of the Congress was not much more satisfactory. It did, however, issue a Declara-

tion of Rights, a protest against a standing army in the Colonies, a recommendation of commercial non-intercourse with Great Britain, and, as a conciliatory measure, a petition to the king, together with elaborate addresses to the people of Canada, of Great Britain, and of the Colonies. All this talk was of value as putting on record the reasonableness of the American position: but practically it accomplished nothing, for, even during the session, the political and military commotion in Massachusetts increased; the patriotic stir of defence was evident all over the country; and in April, 1775, before the second Continental Congress assembled (May 10) Concord and Lexington had fired the mine, and America rushed to arms. The other members were not as eager for war as Adams was. John Dickinson of Pennsylvania — wealthy, educated moderate, conservative — was for sending another petition to England, which utterly disgusted Adams, who now had faith only in ball-cartridges, and all friendly intercourse ended between the countries. But Dickinson's views prevailed by a small majority, which chafed and hampered Adams, whose earnest preference was for the most vigorous measures. He would seize all the officers of the Crown; he would declare the Colonies free and independent at once; he would frankly tell Great Britain that they were determined to seek alliances with France and Spain if the war

should be continued; he would organize an army and appoint its generals. The Massachusetts militia were already besieging the British in Boston; the war had actually begun. Hence he moved in Congress the appointment of Colonel George Washington, of Virginia, as commander-in-chief, — much to the mortification of John Hancock, president of the Congress, whose vanity led him to believe that he himself was the most fitting man for that important post.

In moving for this appointment, Adams ran some risk that it would not be agreeable to New England people, who knew very little of Washington aside from his having been a military man, and one generally esteemed; but Adams was willing to run the risk in order to precipitate the contest which he knew to be inevitable. He knew further that if Congress would but, as he phrased it, "adopt the army before Boston" and appoint Colonel Washington commander of it, the appointment would cement the union of the Colonies, — his supreme desire. New England and Virginia were thus leagued in one, and that by the action of all the Colonies in Congress assembled.

Although Mr. Adams had been elected chief-justice of Massachusetts, as its ablest lawyer, he could not be spared from the labors of Congress. He was placed on the most important committees, among others one to prepare a resolution in favor of instructing the

Colonies to favor State governments, and later on, the one to draft the Declaration of Independence, with Jefferson, Franklin, Sherman, and Livingston. The special task was assigned to Jefferson, not only because he was able with his pen, but because Adams was too outspoken, too imprudent, and too violent to be trusted in framing such a document. Nothing could curb his tongue. He severely criticised most every member of Congress, if not openly, at least in his confidential letters; while in his public efforts with tongue and pen he showed more power than discretion.

At that time Thomas Paine appeared in America as a political writer, and his florid pamphlet on "Common Sense" was much applauded by the people. Adams's opinion of this irreligious republican is not favorable: "That part of 'Common Sense' which relates to independence is clearly written, but I am bold enough to say there is not a fact nor a reason stated in it which has not been frequently urged in Congress," while "his arguments from the Old Testament to prove the unlawfulness of monarchy are ridiculous."

The most noteworthy thing connected with Adams's career of four years in Congress was his industry. During that time he served on at least one hundred committees, and was always at the front in debating measures of consequence. Perhaps his most memo-

rable service was the share he had in drawing the Articles of Confederation, although he left Philadelphia before his signature could be attached. This instrument had great effect in Europe, since the States proclaimed union as well as independence. It was thenceforward easier for the States to borrow money, although the Confederation was loose-jointed and essentially temporary; nationality was not established until the Constitution was adopted. Adams not only guided the earliest attempts at union at home, but was charged with great labors in connection with foreign relations, while as head of the War Board he had enough both of work and of worry to have broken down a stronger man. Always and everywhere he was doing valuable work.

On the mismanagement of Silas Deane, as an American envoy in Paris, it became necessary to send an abler man in his place, and John Adams was selected, though he was not distinguished for diplomatic tact. Nor could his mission be called in all respects a success. He was too imprudent in speech, and was not, like Franklin, conciliatory with the French minister of Foreign Affairs, who took a cordial dislike to him, and even snubbed him. But then it was Adams who penetrated the secret motives of the Count de Vergennes in rendering aid to America, which Franklin would not believe, or could not see. Nor were the

relations of Adams very pleasant with the veteran Franklin himself, whose merits he conceived to be exaggerated, and of whom it is generally believed he was envious. He was as fussy in business details as Franklin was easy and careless. He thought that Franklin lived too luxuriously and was too fond of the praises of women.

In 1780 Adams transferred his residence to Amsterdam in order to secure the recognition of independence, and to get loans from Dutch merchants; but he did not meet with much success until the surrender of Lord Cornwallis virtually closed the war. He then returned to Paris, in 1782, to assist Franklin and Jay to arrange the treaty of peace with Great Britain, and the acknowledgment of the independence of the States; and here his steady persistency, united with the clear discernment of Jay, obtained important concessions in reference to the fisheries, the navigation of the Mississippi, and American commerce.

Adams never liked France, as Franklin and Jefferson did. The French seemed to him shallow, insincere, egotistical, and swayed by fanciful theories. Ardent as was his love of liberty, he distrusted the French Revolution, and had no faith in its leaders. Nor was he a zealous republican. He saw more in the English Constitution to admire than Americans generally did; although, while he respected English

institutions, he had small liking for Englishmen, as they had for him. In truth, he was a born grumbler, and a censorious critic. He did not like anybody very much, except his wife, and, beyond his domestic circle, saw more faults than virtues in those with whom he was associated. Even with his ardent temperament he had not those warm friendships which marked Franklin and Jefferson.

John Adams found his residence abroad rather irksome and unpleasant, and he longed to return to his happy home. But his services as a diplomatist were needed in England. No more suitable representative of the young republic, it was thought, could be found, in spite of his impatience, restlessness, pugnacity, imprudence, and want of self-control; for he was intelligent, shrewd, high-spirited, and quick-sighted. The diplomatists could not stand before his blunt directness, and he generally carried his point by eloquence and audacity. His presence was commanding, and he impressed everybody by his magnetism and brain-power. So Congress, in 1785, appointed him minister to Great Britain. The King forced himself to receive Adams graciously in his closet, but afterwards he treated him even with rudeness; and of course the social circles of London did the same. The minister soon found his position more uncomfortable even than it had been in Paris. His salary, also, was too small

to support his rank like other ambassadors, and he was obliged to economize. He represented a league rather than a nation, — a league too poor and feeble to pay its debts, and he had to endure many insults on that account. Nor could he understand the unfriendly spirit with which he was received. He had hoped that England would have forgotten her humiliation, but discovered his error when he learned that the States were to be indirectly crushed and hampered by commercial restrictions and open violations of the law of nations. England being still in a state of irritation toward her former colonies, he was not treated with becoming courtesy, and of course had no social triumphs such as Franklin had enjoyed at Paris. Finding that he could not accomplish what he had desired and hoped for, he became disgusted, possibly embittered, and sent in his resignation, after a three years' residence in London, and returned home. Altogether, his career as a diplomatist was not a great success; his comparative failure, however, was caused rather by the difficulties he had to surmount than by want of diplomatic skill. If he was not as successful as had been hoped, he returned with unsullied reputation. He had made no great mistakes, and had proved himself honest, incorruptible, laborious, and patriotic. The country appreciated his services, when, under the new Constitution, the consolidated Union

chose its rulers, and elevated him to the second office in the republic.

The only great flaw in Adams as Vice-President was his strange jealousy of Washington, — a jealousy hardly to be credited were it not for the uniform testimony of historians. But then in public estimation he stood second only to the "Father of his Country." He stood even higher than Hamilton, between whom and himself there were unpleasant relations. Indeed, Adams's dislike of both Hamilton and Jefferson was to some extent justified by unmistakable evidences of enmity on their part. The rivalries and jealousies among the great leaders of the revolutionary period are a blot on our history. But patriots and heroes as those men were, they were all human; and Adams was peculiarly so. By universal consent he is conceded to have been a prime factor in the success of the Revolution. He held back Congress when reconciliation was in the air; he committed the whole country to the support of New England, and gave to the war its indispensable condition of success, — the leadership of Washington; he was called by Jefferson "the Colossus of debate in carrying the Declaration of Independence" and cutting loose from England; he was wise and strong and indefatigable in governmental construction, as well as in maintaining the armies in the field; he accomplished vast labors affecting both

the domestic and foreign relations of the country, and, despite his unpleasant personal qualities of conceit and irritability, his praise was in every mouth. He could well afford to recognize the full worth of every one of his co-laborers. But he did not. Magnanimity was certainly not his most prominent trait.

The duties of a vice-president hardly allow scope for great abilities. The office is only a stepping-stone. There was little opportunity to engage in the debates which agitated the country. The duties of judicially presiding over the Senate are not congenial to a man of the hot temper and ambition of Adams; and when party lines were drawn between the Federalists and Republicans he earnestly espoused the principles of the former. He was in no sense a democrat except in his recognition of popular political rights. He believed in the rule of character, as indicated by intellect and property. He had no great sympathy with the people in their aspirations, although springing from the people himself, — the son of a moderate farmer, no more distinguished than ordinary farmers. He was the first one of his family to reach eminence or wealth. The accusation against him of wishing to introduce a king, lords, and commons was most unjust; but he was at heart an aristocrat, as much as were Hamilton and Gouverneur Morris. And the more his character was scrutinized after he had won

distinction, the less popular he was. His brightest days were when he was inspiring his countrymen by his eloquence to achieve their independence.

In office Adams did not pre-eminently shine, notwithstanding his executive ability and business habits. It is true, the equal division of the Senate on some very important measures, such as the power of the President to remove from office without the consent of the Senate, the monetary policy proposed by Hamilton, and some others, gave him the opportunity by his casting vote to sustain the administration, and thus decide great principles with advantage to the country. And his eight years of comparative quiet in that position were happy and restful ones. But Adams loved praise, flattery, and social position. He was easily piqued, and quickly showed it. He did not pass for what he was worth, since he was apt to show his worst side first, without tact and without policy. But no one ever doubted his devotion to the country any more than his abilities. Moreover, he was too fond of titles, and the trappings of office and the insignia of rank, to be a favorite with plain people,—not from personal vanity, great as that was in him, but from his notions of the dignities of high office, such as he had seen abroad. Hence he recommended to Washington the etiquette of a court, and kept it up himself when he became president. Against this must

be placed his fondness for leaving the capital and running off to make little visits to his farm at Quincy, Massachusetts, where he was always happiest.

I dwell briefly on his career as Vice-President because he had in it so little to do. Nor was his presidency marked by great events, when, upon the completion of Washington's second term, and the refusal of that great man to enter upon a third, Adams was elevated in 1797 to the highest position. The country had settled down to its normal pursuits. There were few movements to arrest the attention of historians.

The most important event of the time was, doubtless, the formation of the two great political parties which divided the nation, one led by Hamilton and the other by Jefferson. They were the natural development of the discussion on adopting the Federal Constitution. The Federalists, composed chiefly of the professional classes, the men of wealth and of social position, and the old officers of the army, wanted a strong central government, protection to infant manufactures, banks and tariffs, — in short, whatever would contribute to the ascendency of intellect and property; the Republicans, largely made up of small farmers, mechanics, and laboring people, desired the extension of the right of suffrage, the prosperity of agriculturists, and State ascendency, and

were fearful of the encroachments of the general government upon the reserved rights of the States and the people at large.

But the leaders of this "people's party," men like the Clintons of the State of New York, were sometimes as aristocratic in their social life as the leaders of the Federalists. During the Revolutionary War the only parties were those who aimed at national independence, and the Royalists, or Tories, who did not wish to sever their connection with the mother country; but these Tories had no political influence when the government was established under Washington. During his first term of office there was ostensibly but one party. It was not until his second term that there were marked divisions. Then public opinion was divided between those who followed Hamilton, Jay, and Adams, and those who looked up to Jefferson, and perhaps Madison, as leaders in the lines to be pursued by the general government in reference to banks, internal improvements, commercial tariffs, the extension of the suffrage, the army and navy, and other subjects.

The quarrels and animosities between these two parties in that early day have never been exceeded in bitterness. Ministers preached political sermons; the newspapers indulged in unrestricted abuse of public men. The air was full of political slanders, lies, and

misrepresentations. Family ties were sundered, and old friendships were broken. The Federalists were distrustful of the French Revolution, and, finally, hostile to it, while the Republican-Democrats were its violent advocates. In New York nearly every Episcopalian was a Federalist, and in Massachusetts and Connecticut nearly every Congregational minister. Free-thinkers in religion were generally Democrats, as the party gradually came to be called. Farmers were pretty evenly divided; but their "hired hands" were Democrats, and so were most immigrants.

Whatever the difference of opinion among the contending parties, however, they were sincere and earnest, and equally patriotic. The people selected for office those whom they deemed most capable, or those who would be most useful to the parties representing their political views. It never occurred to the people of either party to vote with the view of advancing their own selfish and private interests. If it was proposed to erect a public building, or dig a canal, or construct an aqueduct, they would vote for or against it according to their notions of public utility. They never dreamed of the spoils of jobbery. In other words, the contractors and "bosses" did not say to the people, "If you will vote for me as the superintendent of this public improvement, I will employ you on the works whether you are industrious and capable, or

idle and worthless." There were then no Tammany Hall politicians or Philadelphia Republican ringsters. The spoils system was unknown. That is an invention of later times. Politicians did not seek office with a view of getting rich. Both Federalists and Democrats sought office to secure either the ascendency of their party or what they deemed the welfare of the country.

As the Democratic leaders made appeals to a larger constituency, consisting of the laboring classes, than the Federalists did, they gradually gained the ascendency. Moreover, they were more united. The Federal leaders quarrelled among themselves. Adams and Hamilton were accused of breaking up their party. Jefferson adhered to his early principles, and looked upon the advance of democratic power as the logical result of the principles of the Declaration of Independence. He had unlimited faith in the instincts and aspirations of the people, and in their ability to rule themselves, while Adams thought that the masses were not able to select their wisest and greatest men for rulers. The latter would therefore restrict the suffrage to men of property and education, while Jefferson would give it to every citizen, whether poor or rich, learned or ignorant.

With such conflicting views between these great undoubted patriots and statesmen, there were increas-

ing alienations, ripening into bitter hostilities. If Adams was the more profound statesman, according to old-fashioned ideas, basing government on the lessons of experience and history, Jefferson was the more astute and far-reaching politician, foreseeing the increasing ascendency of democratic principles. One would suppose that Adams, born on a New England farm, and surrounded with Puritan influences, would have had more sympathy with the people than Jefferson, who was born on a Virginia plantation, and accustomed to those social inequalities which slavery produces. But it seems that as he advanced in years, in experience, and in honors, Adams became more and more imbued with aristocratic ideas, — like Burke, whose early career was marked for liberal and progressive views, but who became finally the most conservative of English statesmen, and recoiled from the logical sequence of the principles he originally advocated with such transcendent eloquence and ability. And Adams, when he became president, after rendering services to his country second only to those of Washington, became saddened and embittered; and even as Burke raved over the French Revolution, so did Adams grow morose in view of the triumphs of the Democracy and the hopeless defeat of his party, which was destined never again to rally except under another name, and then only for a brief period. There

was little of historic interest connected with the administration of John Adams as President of the United States. He held his exalted office only for one term, while his rivals were re-elected during the twenty-four succeeding years of our national history, — all disciples and friends of Jefferson, who followed out the policy he had inaugurated. In general, Adams pursued the foreign policy of Washington, which was that of peace and non-interference. In domestic administration he made only ten removals from office, and kept up the ceremonies which were then deemed essential to the dignity of president.

The interest in his administration centred in the foreign relations of the government. It need not be added that he sympathized with Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution," — that immortal document which for rhetoric and passion has never been surpassed, and also for the brilliancy with which reverence for established institutions is upheld, and the disgust, hatred, and scorn uttered for the excesses which marked the godless revolutionists of the age. It is singular that so fair-minded a biographer as Parton could see nothing but rant and nonsense in the most philosophical political essay ever penned by man. It only shows that a partisan cannot be an historian any more than can a laborious collector of details, like Freeman, accurate as he may be.

Adams, like Burke, abhorred the violence of those political demagogues who massacred their king and turned their country into a vile shambles of blood and crime; he equally detested the military despotism which succeeded under Napoleon Bonaparte; and the Federalists generally agreed with him, — even the farmers of New England, whose religious instincts and love of rational liberty were equally shocked.

Affairs between France and the United States became then matters of paramount importance. Adams, as minister to Paris, had perceived the selfish designs of the Count de Vergennes, and saw that his object in rendering aid to the new republic had been but to cripple England. And the hollowness of French generosity was further seen when the government of Napoleon looked with utter contempt on the United States, whose poverty and feebleness provoked to spoliations as hard to bear as those restrictions which England imposed on American commerce. It was the object of Adams, in whose hands as the highest executive officer, the work of negotiation was placed, to remove the sources of national grievances, and at the same time to maintain friendly relations with the offending parties. And here he showed a degree of vigor and wisdom which cannot be too highly commended.

The President was patient, reasonable, and patriotic. He curbed his hot temper, and moderated his just wrath. He averted a war, and gained all the diplomatic advantages that were possible. He selected for envoys both Federalists and Democrats, — the ablest men of the nation. When Hamilton and Jefferson declined diplomatic missions in order to further their ambitious ends at home, who of the statesmen remaining were superior to Marshal, Pinckney, and Gerry? How noble their disdain and lofty their independence when Talleyrand sought from them a bribe of millions to secure his influence with the First Consul! "Millions for defence, not a cent for tribute," are immortal words. And when negotiations failed, and there seemed to be no alternative but war, — and that with the incarnate genius of war, Napoleon, — Adams, pacific as was his policy, set about most promptly to meet the exigency, and recommended the construction of a navy, and the mustering of an army of sixteen thousand men, and even induced Washington to take the chief command once more in defence of American institutions. Although at first demurring to Washington's request, he finally appointed Hamilton, his greatest political rival, to be the second general in command, — a man who was eager for war, and who hoped, through war, to become the leader of the nation, as well as leader of his

party. When, seeing that the Americans would fight rather than submit to insult and injustice, the French government made overtures for peace, the army was disbanded. But Adams never ceased his efforts to induce Congress to take measures for national defence in the way of construction of forts on the coast, and the building of ships-of-war to protect commerce and the fisheries.

In regard to the domestic matters which marked his administration the most important was the enactment of the alien and sedition laws, now generally regarded as Federal blunders. The historical importance of the passage of these laws is that they contributed more than all other things together to break up the Federal party, and throw political power into the hands of the Republicans, as the Democrats were still called. At that time there were over thirty thousand French exiles in the country, generally discontented with the government. With them, liberty meant license to do and say whatever they pleased. As they were not naturalized, they were not citizens; and as they were not citizens, the Federalists maintained that they could not claim the privileges which citizens enjoyed to the full extent, — that they were in the country on sufferance, and if they made mischief, if they fanned discontents, if they abused the President or the members of Congress, they were liable to punishment.

It must be remembered that the government was not settled on so firm foundations as at the present day; even Jefferson wrought himself to believe that John Adams was aiming to make himself king, and establish aristocratic institutions like those in England. This assumption was indeed preposterous and ill-founded; nevertheless it was credited by many Republicans. Moreover, the difficulties with France seemed fraught with danger; there might be war, and these aliens might prove public enemies. It was probably deemed by the Federalists, governing under such dangers, to be a matter of public safety to put these foreigners under the eyes of the Executive, as a body to be watched, a body that might prove dangerous in the unsettled state of the country.

The Federalists doubtless strained the Constitution, and put interpretations upon it which would not bear the strictest scrutiny. They were bitterly accused of acting against the Constitution. It was averred that everybody who settled in the country was entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," according to the doctrine taught in the Declaration of Independence. And this was not denied by the Federalists so long as the foreigners behaved themselves; but when they gave vent to extreme liberal sentiments, like the French revolutionists, and became a nuisance, it was deemed right, and a wise precaution.

to authorize the President to send them back to their own countries.

Now it is probable that these aliens were not as dangerous as they seemed; they were ready to become citizens when the suffrage should be enlarged; their discontent was magnified; they were mostly excitable but harmless people, unreasonably feared. Jefferson looked upon them as future citizens, trusted them with his unbounded faith in democratic institutions, and thought that the treatment of them in the Alien Laws was unjust, impolitic, and unkind.

The Sedition Laws were even more offensive, since under them citizens could be fined and imprisoned if they wrote what were called "libels" on men in power; and violent language against men in power was deemed a libel. But all parties used violent language in that fermenting period. It was an era of the bitterest party strife. Everybody was misrepresented who even aimed at office. The newspapers were full of slanders of the most eminent men, and neither Adams, nor Jefferson, nor Hamilton, escaped unjust criminations and the malice of envenomed tongues. All this embittered the Federalists, then in the height of their power. In both houses of Congress the Federalists were in a majority. The Executive, the judges, and educated men generally, were Federalists. Men in power are apt to abuse it.

It is easy now to see that the Alien and Sedition Laws must have been exceedingly unpopular, but the government was not then wise enough to see the logical issue. Jefferson and his party saw it, and made the most of it. In their appeals to the people they inflamed their prejudices and excited their fears. They made a most successful handle of what they called the violation of the Constitution and the rights of man; and the current turned. From the day that the obnoxious and probably unnecessary laws were passed, the Federal party was doomed. It lost its hold on the people. The dissensions and rivalries of the Federal leaders added to their discomfiture. What they lost they never could regain. Only war would have put them on their feet again; and Adams, with true patriotism, while ready for necessary combat, was opposed to a foreign war for purposes of domestic policy.

Yet the ambitious statesman did not wish to be dethroned. He loved office dearly, and hence he did not yield gracefully to the triumph of the ascendent party, which grew stronger every day. And when their victory was assured and his term of office was about to expire, he sat up till twelve o'clock the last night of his term, signing appointments that ought to have been left to his successors. Among these appointments was that of John Marshall, his Secre-

tary of State, to be Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court, — one that reflected great credit upon his discernment, in spite of its impropriety, for Marshall's name is one of the greatest in the annals of our judiciary. On the following morning, before the sun had risen, the ex-president was on his way to Braintree, not waiting even for the inauguration ceremonies that installed Jefferson in the chair which he had left so unwillingly, and giving vent to the bitterest feelings, alike unmanly and unreasonable.

I have not dwelt on the minor events of his presidency, such as his appointments to foreign missions, since these did not seriously affect the welfare of the country. I cannot go into unimportant events and quarrels, as in the case of his dismissal of Pickering and other members of his Cabinet. Such matters belong to the historians, especially those who think it necessary to say everything they can, — to give minute details of all events. These small details, appropriate enough in works written for specialists, are commonly dry and uninteresting; they are wearisome to the general reader, and are properly soon forgotten, as mere lumber which confuses rather than instructs. No historian can go successfully into minute details unless he has the genius of Macaulay. On this rock Freeman, with all his accuracy, was wrecked; as an historian he can claim only a sec-

ondary place, since he had no eye to proportion, — in short, was no artist, like Froude. He was as heavy as most German professors, to whom one thing is as important as another. Accuracy on minute points is desirable and necessary, but this is not the greatest element of success in an historian.

Some excellent writers of history think that the glory of Adams was brightest in the period before he became president, when he was a diplomatist, — that as president he made great mistakes, and had no marked executive ability. I think otherwise. It seems to me that his special claims to the gratitude of his country must include the wisdom of his administration in averting an entangling war, and guiding the ship of state creditably in perplexing dangers; that in most of his acts, while filling the highest office in the gift of the people, he was patient, patriotic, and wise. We forget the exceeding difficulties with which he had to contend, and the virulence of his enemies. What if he was personally vain, pompous, irritable, jealous, stubborn, and fond of power? These traits did not swerve him from the path of duty and honor, nor dim the lustre of his patriotism, nor make him blind to the great interests of the country as he understood them, — the country whose independence and organized national life he did so much to secure. All cavils are wasted, and worse than wasted, on such

a man. His fame will shine forevermore, in undimmed lustre, to bless mankind. Small is that critic who sees the defects but has no eye to the splendors of a great career!

There is but little more to be said of Adams after the completion of his term of office. He retired to his farm in Quincy, a part of Braintree, for which he had the same love that Washington had for Mount Vernon, and Jefferson for Monticello. In the placid rest of agricultural life, and with a comfortable independence, his later days were spent. The kindly sentiments of his heart grew warmer with leisure, study, and friendly intercourse with his town's-people. He even renewed a pleasant correspondence with Jefferson. He took the most interest, naturally, in the political career of his son, John Quincy Adams, whom he persuaded to avoid extremes, so that it is difficult to say with which political party he sympathized the most. *In mediis tutissimus ibis.*

In tranquil serenity the ex-president pondered the past, and looked forward to the future. His correspondence in the dignified retirement of his later years is most instructive, showing great interest in education and philanthropy. He was remarkably blessed in his family and in all his domestic matters, — the founder of an illustrious house, eminent for four successive generations. His wife, who died

in 1818, was one of the most remarkable women of the age, — his companion, his friend, and his counsellor, — to whose influence the greatness of his son, John Quincy, is in no small degree to be traced.

Adams lived twenty-five years after his final retirement from public life in 1801, surrounded by his children and grand-children, dividing his time between his farm, his garden, and his library. He lived to see his son president of the United States He lived to see the complete triumph of the institutions he had helped to establish. He enjoyed the possession of all his faculties to the last, and his love of reading continued unabated to the age of ninety-one, when he quietly passed away, July 4, 1826. His last prayer was for his country, and his last words were, — "Independence forever!"

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LXXVII.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY.

1743–1826.

LXXVII.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY.

THIS illustrious statesman was born April 13, 1743, at "Shadwell," his father's home, among the mountains of Central Virginia, about one hundred and fifty miles from Williamsburg. His father, Peter Jefferson, did not belong to the patrician class, as the great planters called themselves, but he owned a farm of nineteen hundred acres, cultivated by thirty slaves, and raised wheat. What aristocratic blood flowed in young Jefferson's veins came from his mother, who was a Randolph, of fine presence and noble character.

At seventeen, the youth entered the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, after having been imperfectly fitted at a school kept by a Mr. Maury, an Episcopal clergyman. He was a fine-looking boy, ruddy and healthy, with no bad habits, disposed to improve his mind, which was naturally inquisitive, and having the *entrée* into the good society

of the college town. Williamsburg was also the seat of government for the province, where were collected for a few months in the year the prominent men of Virginia, as members of the House of Burgesses. In this attractive town Jefferson spent seven years, — two in the college, studying the classics, history, and mathematics (for which he had an aptitude), and five in the law-office of George Wythe, — thus obtaining as good an education as was possible in those times. He amused himself by playing on a violin, dancing in gay society, riding fiery horses, and going to the races. Although he was far from rich, he had as much money as was good for him, and he turned it to good advantage, — laying the foundation of an admirable library. He cultivated the society of the brightest people. Among these were, John Page, afterwards governor of Virginia; Dr. Small, the professor of mathematics at the college, afterwards the friend of Darwin at Birmingham; Edmund Randolph, an historic Virginian; Francis Fauquier, the lieutenant-governor of the province, said to be a fine scholar and elegant gentleman of the French school, who introduced into Virginia the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot — as well as high play at cards; George Wythe, a rising lawyer of great abilities; John Burk, — the historian of Virginia; and lastly, Patrick Henry, — rough, jolly, and lazy. From such associates, all dis-

tinguished sooner or later, Jefferson learned much of society, of life, and literature. At college, as in after life, his forte was writing. Jefferson never, to his dying day, could make a speech. He could talk well in a small circle of admirers and friends, and he held the readiest pen in America, but he had no eloquence as a speaker, which, I think, is a gift like poetry, seldom to be acquired; and yet he was a great admirer of eloquence, without envy and without any attempts at imitation. A constant reader, studious, reflective, inquisitive, liberal-minded, slightly visionary, in love with novelties and theories, the young man grew up, — a universal favorite, both for his accomplishments, and his almost feminine gentleness of temper, which made him averse to anything like personal quarrels. I do not read that he ever persistently and cordially hated and abused but one man, — the greatest political genius this country has ever known, — and hated even him rather from divergence of political views than from personal resentment.

As Jefferson had no landed property sufficiently large to warrant his leading the life of a leisurely country gentleman, — the highest aspiration of a Virginian aristocrat in the period of entailed estates, — it was necessary for him to choose a profession, and only that of a lawyer could be thought of by

a free-thinking politician, — for such he was from first to last. Indeed, politics ever have been the native air which Southern gentlemen have breathed for more than a century. Since political power, amid such social distinctions and inequalities as have existed in the Southern States, necessarily has been confined to the small class, the Southern people have always been ruled by a few political leaders, — more influential and perhaps more accomplished than any corresponding class at the North. Certainly they have made more pretensions, being more independent in their circumstances, and many of them educated abroad, as are the leaders in South American States at the present day. The heir to ten thousand or twenty thousand acres, with two hundred negroes, in the last century, naturally cultivated those sentiments which were common to great landed proprietors in England, especially pride of birth.

It is remarkable that Jefferson, with his surroundings, should have been so early and so far advanced in his opinions about the rights of man and political equality; but then he was by birth only half-way between the poor whites and the patrician planters; moreover, he was steeped in the philosophy of Rousseau, having sentimental proclivities, and a leaning to humanitarian theories, both political and social.

Jefferson was admitted to the bar in 1767, after five years in Wythe's office. He commenced his practice at a favorable time for a lawyer, in a period of great financial embarrassments on the part of the planters, arising from their extravagant and ostentatious way of living. They lived on their capital rather than on their earnings, and even their broad domains were nearly exhausted by the culture of tobacco, — the chief staple of Virginia, which also had declined in value. It was almost impossible for an ordinary planter to make two ends meet, no matter how many acres he cultivated, and how many slaves he possessed; for he had inherited expensive tastes, a liking for big houses and costly furniture and blooded horses, and he knew not where to retrench. His pride prevented him from economy, since he was socially compelled to keep tavern for visitors and poor relations, without compensation. Hence, nearly all the plantations were heavily encumbered, whether great or small. The planter disdained manual labor, however poor he might be, and every year added to his debts. He lived in comparative idleness, amusing himself with horse-races, hunting, and other "manly sports," such as became country gentlemen in the "olden time." The real poverty of Virginia was seen in the extreme difficulty of raising troops for State or national defence in times of greatest peril. The calls of patriotism were

not unheeded by the "chivalry" of the South; but what could patriotic gentlemen do when their estates were wasting away by litigation and unsuccessful farming?

It was amid such surroundings that Jefferson began his career. Although he could not make a speech, could hardly address a jury, he had sixty-eight cases the first year of his practice, one hundred and fifteen the second, one hundred and ninety-eight the third. He was, doubtless, a good lawyer, but not a remarkable one, law business not being to his taste. When he had practised seven years in the general court his cases had dropped to twenty-nine, but his office business had increased so as to give him an income of £400 from his profession, and he received as much more from his estate, which had swelled to nearly two thousand acres. His industry, his temperance, his methodical ways, his frugality, and his legal research, had been well rewarded. While not a great lawyer, he must have been a studious one, for his legal learning was a large element in his future success. At the age of thirty-one he was a prominent citizen, a good office lawyer, and a rising man, with the confidence and respect of every one who knew him, — and withal, exceedingly popular from his plain manners, his modest pretensions, and patriotic zeal. He was not then a particularly marked man, but was on the road to dis-

tinction, since a new field was open to him, — that of politics, for which he had undoubted genius. The distracted state of the country, on the verge of war with Great Britain, called out his best energies. While yet but a boy in college he became deeply interested in the murmurings of Virginia gentlemen against English misgovernment in the Colonies, and early became known as a vigorous thinker and writer with republican tendencies. William Wirt wrote of him that "he was a republican and a philanthropist from the earliest dawn of his character." He entered upon the stormy scene of politics with remarkable zeal, and his great abilities for this arena were rapidly developed.

Jefferson's political career really dates from 1769, when he entered the House of Burgesses as member for Albermarle County in the second year of his practice as a lawyer, after a personal canvass of nearly every voter in the county, and supplying to the voters, as was the custom, an unlimited quantity of punch and lunch for three days. The Assembly was composed of about one hundred members, "gentlemen" of course, among whom was Colonel George Washington. The Speaker was Peyton Randolph, a most courteous aristocrat, with great ability for the duties of a presiding officer. Among other prominent members were Mr. Pendleton, Colonel Bland, and Mr. Nicholas, leading

lawyers of the province. Mr. Jefferson, though still a young man, was put upon important committees, for he had a good business head, and was ready with his pen.

In 1772 Mr. Jefferson married a rich widow, who brought him forty thousand acres and one hundred and thirty-five slaves, so that he now took his place among the wealthy planters, although, like Washington, he was only a yeoman by birth. With increase of fortune he built "Monticello," on the site of "Shadwell," which had been burned. It was on the summit of a hill five hundred feet high, about three miles from Charlottesville; but it was only by twenty-five years' ceaseless nursing and improvement that this mansion became the finest residence in Virginia, with its lawns, its flower-beds, its walks, and its groves, adorned with perhaps the finest private library in America. No wonder he loved this enchanting abode, where he led the life of a philosopher.

But stirring events soon called him from this retreat. A British war vessel, in Narragansett Bay, in pursuit of a packet which had left Newport for Providence without permission, ran aground about seventeen miles from the latter town, and was burned by disguised Yankee citizens, indignant at the outrages which had been perpetrated by this armed schooner on American commerce. A reward of £500 was offered for the dis-

covery of the perpetrators; and the English government, pronouncing this to be an act of high treason, passed an ordinance that the persons implicated in the act should be transported to England for trial. This decree struck at the root of American liberties, and aroused an indignation which reached the Virginian legislature, then assembled at Williamsburg. A committee was appointed to investigate the affair, composed of Peyton Randolph, R. C. Nicholas, Richard Henry Lee, Benjamin Harrison, Edmund Pendleton, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson, — all now historic names, — mostly lawyers, but representatives of the prominent families of Virginia and leaders of the Assembly. Indignant Resolutions were offered, and copies were sent to the various Colonial legislatures. This is the first notice of Jefferson in his political career.

In 1773, with Patrick Henry and some others, Jefferson originated the Committee of Correspondence, which was the beginning of the intimate relations in common political interest among the Colonies. In 1774 the House of Burgesses was twice dissolved by the royal governor, and Jefferson was a member of the convention to choose delegates to the first Continental Congress; while in the same year he published a "Summary View of the Rights of British America," — a strong plea for the right to resist English taxation.

In 1775 we find Jefferson a member of the Colonial Convention at which Patrick Henry, also a member, made the renowned war speech. "Give me liberty, or give me death." Those burning words of the Virginia orator penetrated the heart of every farmer in Massachusetts, as they did the souls of the Southern planters. In a few months the royal government ceased to exist in Virginia, the governor, Dunmore, having retreated to a man-of-war, and Jefferson had become a member of the Continental Congress at its second session in Philadelphia, with the reputation of being one of the best political writers of the day, and an ardent patriot with very radical opinions.

Even then hopes had not entirely vanished of a reconciliation with Great Britain, but before the close of the year the introduction of German mercenaries to put down the growing insurrection satisfied everybody that there was nothing left to the Colonies but to fight, or tamely submit to royal tyranny. Preparations for military resistance were now made everywhere, especially in Massachusetts, and in Virginia, where Jefferson, who had been obliged by domestic afflictions to leave Congress in December, was most active in raising money for defence, and in inspiring the legislature to set up a State government. When Jefferson again took his seat in Congress, May 13, 1776, he was put upon the committee to draught

a Declaration of Independence, composed, as already noted, of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston, besides himself. To him, however, was entrusted by the committee the labor and the honor of penning the draught, which was adopted with trifling revision. He was always very proud of this famous document, and it was certainly effective. Among the ordinary people of America he is, perhaps, better known for this rather rhetorical piece of composition than for all his other writings put together. It was one of those happy hits of genius which make a man immortal, — owing, however, no small measure of its fame to the historic importance of the occasion that called it forth. It was publicly read on every Fourth-of-July celebration for a hundred years. It embodied the sentiments of a great people not disposed to criticism, but ready to interpret in a generous spirit; it had, at the time, a most stimulating effect at home, and in Europe was a revelation of the truth about the feeling in America.

From the 4th of July, 1776, Thomas Jefferson became one of the most prominent figures identified with American Independence, by reason of his patriotism, his abilities, and advanced views of political principles, though as inferior to Hamilton in original and comprehensive genius as he was superior to him in the arts and foresight of a political leader. He

better understood the people than did his great political rival, and more warmly sympathized with their conditions and aspirations. He became a typical American politician, not by force of public speaking, but by dexterity in the formation and management of a party. Both Patrick Henry and John Adams were immeasurably more eloquent than he, but neither touched the springs of the American heart like this quiet, modest, peace-loving, far-sighted politician, since he, more than any other man of the Revolutionary period, was jealous of aristocratic power. Hamilton, Jay, Gouverneur Morris, were aristocrats who admired the English Constitution, and would have established a more vigorous central government. Jefferson was jealous of central power in the hands of aristocrats. So indeed was Patrick Henry, whose outbursts of eloquence thrilled all audiences alike, — the greatest natural orator this country has produced, if Henry Clay may be excepted; but he was impractical, and would not even endorse the Constitution which was afterwards adopted, as not guarding sufficiently what were called natural rights and the independence of the States. This ultimately led to an alienation between these great men, and to the disparagement of Henry by Jefferson as a lawyer and statesman, when he was the most admired and popular man in Virginia, and "had only to say 'Let

this be law,' and it was law, — when he ruled by his magical eloquence the majority of the Assembly, and when his edicts were registered by that body with less opposition than that of the Grand Monarque himself from his subservient parliaments." Had he shown any fitness for military life, Patrick Henry would doubtless have been intrusted with an important command; but, like Jefferson, his talents were confined to civic affairs alone. Moreover, it is said that he was lazy and fond of leisure, and that it was only when he was roused by powerful passions or a great occasion that his extraordinary powers bore all before him in an irresistible torrent, as did the eloquence of Mirabeau in the National Convention.

Contemplative men of studious habits and a philosophical cast of mind are apt to underrate the genius which sways a popular assembly. Hence, Jefferson thought Henry superficial. But in spite of the defects of his early education, Henry's attainments were considerable, and the profoundest lawyers, like Wirt, Nicholas, and Jay, acknowledged his great forensic ability. Washington always held him in great esteem and affection; and certainly had Henry been a shallow lawyer, Washington, whose judgment of men was notably good, would not have offered him the post of Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court, — although, as Jefferson sneeringly said, "he knew it would be refused."

Jefferson declined a re-election to the third Continental Congress, and in September, 1776, retired to his farm; but only for a short time, since in October we find him in the Virginia House of Delegates, and chairman of the most important committees, especially that on the revision of the laws of the State. His work in the State legislature was more important than in Congress, since it was mainly through his influence that entails were swept away, and even the law of primogeniture. Instead of an aristocracy of birth and wealth, he would build up one of virtue and talent. He also assaulted State support of the Episcopal Church — which was in Virginia "the Established Church" — as an engine of spiritual tyranny, and took great interest in all matters of education, formulating a system of common schools, which, however, never was put into practice. He was also opposed to slavery, having the conviction that the day would come when the negroes would be emancipated. He had before this tried to induce the Virginia law-makers to legalize manumission, and in 1778 succeeded in having them forbid importation of slaves. Dr. James Schouler's recent "Life of Jefferson" says that the mitigation and final abolishment of slavery were among his dearest ambitions, and adduces in illustration the failure of his plan in 1784 for organizing the Western territories because it pro-

vided for free States south as well as north of the Ohio River, and also his successful efforts as President to get Congress to abolish slave importation in 1806–7. His warnings as to what must happen if emancipation were not in some way provided for are familiar, as fulfilled prophecy.

After two years at State law-making Jefferson succeeded Patrick Henry as governor of Virginia, in the summer of 1779. But although his administration was popular, it was not marked as pre-eminently able. He had no military abilities for such a crisis in American affairs, nor even remarkable executive talent. He was a man of thought rather than of action. His happiest hours were spent in his library. He did not succeed in arousing the militia when the English were already marching to the seat of government, and when the Cherokee Indians were threatening hostilities on the southwestern border. Nor did he escape the censure of members of the legislature, which greatly annoyed and embittered him, so that he seriously thought of retiring from public life.

In 1782, on the death of his wife, whom he tenderly loved, we find him again for a short time in Congress, which appointed him in 1784, as additional agent to France with Franklin and Adams to negotiate commercial treaties. On the return of Franklin he was accredited sole minister to France, to succeed that

great diplomatist. He remained in France five years, much enamoured with French society, as was Franklin, in spite of his republican sentiments. He hailed, with all the transport his calm nature would allow, the French Revolution, and was ever after a warm friend to France until the Genet affair, when his eyes were partially opened to French intrigues and French arrogance. But the principles which the early apostles of revolution advocated were always near his heart. These he never repudiated. It was only the excesses of the Revolution which filled him with distrust.

In regard to the Revolution on the whole, he took issue with Adams, Hamilton, Jay, and Morris, and with the sober judgment of the New England patriots. England he detested from first to last, and could see no good in her institutions, whether social, political, or religious. He hated the Established Church even more than royalty, as the nurse of both superstition and spiritual tyranny. Even the Dissenters were not liberal enough for him. He would have abolished, if he could, all religious denominations and organizations. Above all things he despised the etiquette and pomp of the English Court, as relics of mediæval feudalism. To him there was nothing sacred in the person or majesty of a king, who might be an idiot or a tyrant. He somewhere remarks that in all Europe not one king in twenty has ordinary intelligence.

With such views, he was a favorite with the savants of the French Revolution, as much because they were semi-infidels as because they were opposed to feudal institutions. The great points of diplomacy had already been settled by Franklin, and he had not much to do in France, although his talents as a diplomatist were exceptional, owing to his coolness, his sagacity, his learning, and his genial nature There was nothing austere about him, as there was in Adams. His manners, though simple, were courteous and gentlemanly. He was diligent in business, and was accessible to everybody. No American was more likely to successfully follow Franklin than he, from his desire to avoid broils, and the pacific turn of his mind. In this respect he was much better fitted to deal with the Count de Vergennes than was John Adams, whose suspicious and impetuous temper was always getting him into trouble, not merely with the French government, but with his associates.

And yet Adams doubtless penetrated the ulterior designs of France with more sagacity than either Franklin or Jefferson. They now appear, from the concurrent views of historians, to have been to cripple England rather than to help America. It cannot be denied that the French government rendered timely and essential aid to the United States in their struggle with Great Britain, for which Americans should be

grateful, whatever motives may have actuated it. Possibly Franklin, a perfect man of the world as well as an adroit diplomatist, saw that the French Government was not entirely disinterested; but he wisely held his tongue, and gave no offence, feeling that half a loaf was better than no loaf at all; but Adams could not hold his tongue for any length of time, and gave vent to his feelings; so that in his mission he was continually snubbed, and contrived to get himself hated both by Vergennes and Franklin. "He split his beetle when he should have splitted the log." He was honest and upright to an extraordinary degree; but a diplomatist should have tact, discretion, and prudence. Nor is it necessary that he should lie. Jefferson, like Franklin, had tact and discretion. It really mattered nothing in the final result, even if Vergennes had in view only the interests of France; it is enough that he did assist the Americans to some extent. Adams was a grumbler, and looked at the motives of the act rather than the act itself, and was disposed to forget the obligation altogether, because it was conferred from other views than pure generosity. Moreover, it is gratefully remembered that many persons in France, like La Fayette, were generous and magnanimous toward Americans, through genuine sympathy with a people struggling for liberty.

In reference to the service that Jefferson rendered to his country as minister to France we notice his persistent efforts to suppress the piracy of the Barbary States on the Mediterranean. Although he loved peace he preferred to wage an aggressive war on these pirates rather than to submit to their insults and robberies, as most of the European States did by giving them tribute. But the new American Confederation was too weak financially to support his views, and the piracy and tribute continued until Captain Decatur bombarded Tripoli and chastised Algiers, during Jefferson's presidency, 1803–4. As minister, Jefferson also attempted to remove the shackles on American trade; which, however, did not meet the approval of the Morrises and other protectionists and monopolists in the tobacco trade.

But it was by his unofficial labors at this time that Jefferson benefited his country more than by his official acts as a negotiator. These labors were great, and took up most of his time; they included sending information to his countrymen of all that was going on of importance in the realms of science, art, and literature, giving advice and assistance to the unfortunate, sending seeds and machines and new inventions to America, and acquainting himself with all improvements in agriculture, especially in the culture of rice. He travelled extensively in most of the

countries of Europe, always with his eyes open to learn something useful; one result of which was to deepen his disgust with the institutions of the Old World, and increase his admiration for those of his own country. He doubtless attached too much importance to the political systems of Europe in producing the degradation he saw among the various peoples, even as he too impulsively considered republicanism the source of all good in governments. He was on pleasant terms with the different diplomatic corps, and lived in the easy and profuse style of Virginia planters, — giving few grand dinners, but dispensing a generous hospitality to French visitors as well as to all Americans who called on him. The letters he wrote were innumerable. No public man ever left to posterity more of the results of his observations and thought. Interesting himself in everything and everybody, and freely communicating his ideas in correspondence, he had a wide influence while living, and his ideas have been suggestive and fruitful to thoughtful students of the public interest ever since.

After five years' residence in France, he returned home, a much more intelligent and cultivated man than when he arrived in Paris, which never lost its charm for him, in spite of its political convulsions, its irreligion, and its social inequality. He came back

to Monticello as on a visit only, expecting to return to his post. But another destiny awaited him. Washington required his services in the first Cabinet as Secretary of State for foreign affairs, — a part for which his diplomatic career had admirably qualified him, as well as his general abilities.

The seat of government was then at New York, and Jefferson occupied a house in Maiden Lane, while Hamilton, as Secretary of the Treasury, lived in Pine street. Jefferson's salary was $3,500 a year, five hundred more than Hamilton received; but it is not to be supposed that either lived on his official income. The population of the city was then but thirty-five thousand, and only a few families — at the head of which were the Schuylers, the Livingstons, the Van Rensselaers, and the Morrises — constituted what is called "Society," which was much more ceremonious than at the present day, and more exclusive. All the great officers of the new government were aristocratic and stately, even inaccessible, except Jefferson; and many of the fashions, titles, and ceremonies of European courts were kept up. The factotum of the President signed himself as "Steward of the Household," while Washington himself rode to church in a coach and six, attended by outriders. Great functionaries were called "Most Honorable," and their wives were addressed as "Lady" So-and-So. The most

confidential ministers dared not assume any familiarity with the President. He was not addressed as "Mr. President," but as "Your Excellency," and even that title was too democratic for the taste of John Adams, who thought it lowered the president to the level of a governor of Bermuda, or one of his own secretaries.

Only four men constituted the Cabinet of Washington; but the public business was inconsiderable compared with these times, and Jefferson in the State Department had only four clerks under him. Still, he was a very busy man, as many questions of importance had to be settled. "We are in a wilderness without a footstep to guide us," wrote Madison to Jefferson in reference to Congress. And it applied to the executive government as well as to Congress. Neither the Executive nor the Legislature had precedents to guide them, and everything was in a tangle; there was scarcely any money in the country, and still less in the treasury. Even the President, one of the richest men in the country, if not the richest, had to raise money at two per cent a month to enable his "steward of the household" to pay his grocer's bills, — and all the members of his Cabinet had to sacrifice their private interests in accepting their new positions.

The head of a department was not so great a personage, in reality, as at the present day, and yet very

few men were capable of performing the duties of their position. Probably Alexander Hamilton was the only man in the country then fit to be Secretary of the Treasury, and Jefferson the only man available to be Secretary of State, since Adams was in the vice-presidential chair; and these two men Washington was obliged to retain, in spite of their mutual hostilities and total disagreement on almost every subject presented to their consideration. In nothing were the patience, the patriotism, and the magnanimity of Washington more apparent than in his treatment of these two rival statesmen, perpetually striving to conciliate them, hopelessly attempting to mix oil with water, — the one an aristocratic financier, who saw national prosperity in banks and money and central power; the other a democratic land-owner, who looked upon agriculture as the highest interest, and universal suffrage as the only safe policy for a republic. Between the theories of these rivals, Washington had to steer the ship of state, originating nothing himself, yet singularly clear in his judgment both of men and measures. He was governed equally by the advice of both, since they worked in different spheres, and were not rivals in the sense that Burr and Jefferson were, — that is, leaders in the same party and competitors for the same office.

In regard to the labors and services of Jefferson in

the Department of State, he was cautious, conciliatory, and peace-loving, "neither a fanatic nor an enthusiast," enlightened by twenty-five years of discussion on the principles of law and government, and a practical business man. It required all his tact to prevent entangling foreign alliances, and getting into hot water with both France and England; for neither power had any respect for the new commonwealth, and each seemed inclined to take all the advantage it could of American weakness and inexperience. They were constantly guilty of such offences as the impressment of our seamen, paper blockades, haughty dictation, and insolent treatment of our envoys, having an eye all the while to the future dismemberment of the States, and the rich slices of territory both were likely to acquire in the South and West. At that time there was no navy, no army to speak of, and no surplus revenue. There were irritating questions to be settled with England about boundaries, and the occupation of military posts which she had agreed to evacuate. There were British intrigues with Indians in the interior to make disturbance, while on the borders the fur-trade and fisheries were unsettled. There were debts to be paid from American to English merchants, which were disputed, and treaties to be made, involving all the unsettled principles of political economy, as insoluble apparently to-day as they were one hundred years ago. There

were unjust restrictions on American commerce of the most irritating nature, for American vessels were still excluded from West India ports, and only such products were admitted as could not be dispensed with. Such articles as whale oil, salt fish, salt provisions, and grain itself, could not be exported to any town in England. In France a new spirit seemed to animate the government against America, a disposition to seize everything that was possible, and to dictate in matters with which they had no concern, — even in relation to our own internal affairs, as in the instructions furnished to Genet, whose unscrupulous audacity and meddling intrigues at last exhausted the patience of both Washington and Jefferson.

But the most important thing that happened, of historical interest, when Jefferson was Secretary of State, was the origination of the Republican, or Democratic party, as it was afterwards called, in opposition to the Federal party, led by Hamilton, Jay, and Gouverneur Morris. Of this new party Jefferson was the undisputed founder and life. He fancied he saw in the measures of the Federal leaders a systematic attempt to assimilate American institutions, as far as possible, to those of Great Britain. He looked upon Hamilton as a royalist at heart, and upon his bank, with other financial arrangements, only as an engine to control votes and centralize power at the expense of the

States. He entered into the arena of controversial politics, wrote for the newspapers, appealed to democratic passions, and set in motion a net-work of party machinery to influence the votes of the people, foreseeing the future triumph of his principles. He pulled political wires with as much adroitness and effect as Van Buren in after times, so that the statesman was lost in the politician.

But Jefferson was not a vulgar, a selfish, or a scheming politician. Though ambitious for the presidency, in his heart he preferred the quiet of Monticello to any elevation to which the people could raise him. What he desired supremely was the triumph of democratic principles, since he saw in this triumph the welfare of the country, — the interests of the many against the ascendency of the few, — the real reign of the people, instead of the reign of an aristocracy of money or birth. Believing that the people knew, or ought to know, their own interests, he was willing to intrust them with unlimited political power. The Federalist leaders saw in the ascendency of the people the triumphs of demagogy, the ignoring of experience in government, the reign of passions, unenlightened measures leading to financial and political ruin, and would therefore restrict the privilege, or, as some would say, the right, of suffrage.

In such a war of principles the most bitter ani-

mosities were to be expected, and there has never been a time when such fierce party contests disgraced the country as at the close of Washington's administration, if we except the animosities attending the election of General Jackson. It was really a war between aristocrats and plebeians, as in ancient Rome; and, as at Rome, every succeeding battle ended in the increase of power among the democracy. At the close of the administration of President Adams the Federal party was destroyed forever. It is useless to speculate as to which party was in the right. Probably both parties were right in some things, and wrong in others. The worth of a strong government in critical times has been proved by the wholesome action of such an autocrat as Jackson in the Nullification troubles with South Carolina, and the successful maintenance of the Union by the power-assuming Congress during the Rebellion; while Jackson's autocracy in general, and the centralizing tendency of Congressional legislation since 1865, are instances of the complications likely to arise from too strong a government in a country where the people are the final source of power. The value of universal suffrage — the logical result of Jefferson's views of government — is still an open question, especially in cities. But whether good or bad in its ultimate results, the victory was decisive on the part of the

democracy, whose main principle of "popular sovereignty" has become the established law of the land, and will probably continue to rule as long as American institutions last.

The questions since opened have been in regard to slavery, — in ways which Jefferson never dreamed of, — the comparative power of the North and South, matters of finance, tariffs, and internal improvements, involving the deepest problems of political economy, education, and constitutional law; and as time moves on, new questions will arise to puzzle the profoundest intellects; but the question of the ascendency of the people is settled beyond all human calculations. And it is in this matter especially that Jefferson left his mark on the institutions of his country, — as the champion of democracy, rather than as the champion of the abstract rights of man which he and Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams had asserted, in opposition to the tyranny of Great Britain in her treatment of the Colonies. And here he went beyond Puritan New England, which sought the ascendency of the wisest and the best, when the aristocracy of intellect and virtue should bear sway instead of the unenlightened masses. Historians talk about the aristocracy of the Southern planters, but this was an offshoot of the aristocracy of feudalism, — the dominion of favored classes over the enslaved, the poor, and the miserable.

New England aristocracy was the rule of the wisest and the best, extending to the remotest hamlets, in which the people discussed the elemental principles of Magna Charta and the liberties of Saxon yeomen. This was the aristocracy which had for its defenders such men as the Adamses, the Shermans, and the Langdons, — something new in the history of governments and empires, which was really subverted by the doctrines of Rousseau and the leaders of the French Revolution, whom Jefferson admired and followed.

Jefferson, however, practically believed in the aristocracy of mind, and gave his preference to men of learning and refinement, rather than men of wealth and rank. He was a democrat only in the recognition of the people as the source of future political power, and hence in the belief of the ultimate triumph of the Democratic party, which it was his work to organize and lead. Foreseeing how dangerous the triumph of a vulgar and ignorant mob would be, he tried to provide for educating the people, on the same principle that we would to-day educate the colored race. The great hobby of his life was education. He thus spent the best part of his latter years in founding and directing the University of Virginia, including a plan for popular education as well. To all schemes of education he lent a willing ear; but it was the last

thing which aristocratic Southern planters desired, — the elevation of the poor whites, or political equality. Though a planter, Jefferson was more in sympathy with New England ideas, as to the intellectual improvement of the people and its relation to universal suffrage, than with the Southern gentlemen with whom he associated. Hamilton did not so much care for the education of the people as he did for the ascendency of those who were already educated, especially if wealthy. Property, in his eyes, had great consideration, as with all the influential magnates of the North. Jefferson thought more of men than of their surroundings, and thus became popular with ordinary people in a lower stratum of social life. Hamilton was popular only with the rich, the learned, and the powerful, and stood no chance in the race with Jefferson for popular favor, wherever universal suffrage was established, any more than did John Adams, whose ideas concerning social distinctions, and the ascendency of learning and virtue in matters of government, were decidedly aristocratic.

It is hard to say whether Jefferson or Hamilton was the wiser in his political theories, nor is it certain which was the more astute and far-reaching in his calculations as to the future ascendency of political parties. Down to the Civil War the Democrats had things largely their own way; since then, the

Republican party — lineal descendant of the Federals, through the Whigs — have borne sway until within very recent years, when there has developed a strong reaction against the centralizing tendency compacted by the rallying of the people about the government to resist disunion in 1860–65.

Jefferson became Vice-President on the final retirement of Washington to private life in 1797, when Adams was made President. The vice-presidency was a position of dignity rather than of power, and not so much desired by ambitious men as the office of governor in a great State. What took place of importance in the political field during the presidency of Adams has already been treated. As Vice-President, Jefferson had but little to do officially, but he was as busy as ever with his pen, and in pulling political wires, — especially in doing all he could to obstruct legislation along the lines laid down by the Federal leaders. Of course, like other leaders, he was aiming at the presidency, and I think he was the only man in our history who ever reached this high office by persistent personal efforts to secure it. Burr failed, in spite of his great abilities, as well as Hamilton, Calhoun, Clay, Benton, Webster, Douglas, Seward, and Blaine. All the later presidents have been men who when nominated as candidates for the presidency were comparatively unknown and unimportant in the eyes of the nation, —

selected not for abilities, but as the most "available" candidates; although some of them proved to be men of greater talent and fitness than was generally supposed. The people accepted them, but did not select them, any more than Saul and David were chosen by the people of Israel. Political leaders selected them for party purposes, and rather because they were unknown than because they were known; while greater men, who had the national eye upon them for services and abilities, had created too many enemies, secret or open, for successful competition. An English member of Parliament, of transcendent talent, if superior to all other members for eloquence, wisdom, and tact, is pretty certain of climbing to the premiership, like Canning, Peel, Disraeli, and Gladstone. Probably no American, for a long time to come, can reasonably hope to reach the presidency because he has ambitiously and persistently labored for it, whatever may be his merits or services. In a country of wide extent like the United States, where the representatives of the people and the States in Congress are the real rulers, perhaps this is well.

But even Jefferson did not inordinately seek or desire the presidency. The office quite as earnestly sought him, as the most popular man in the country, who had proved himself to be a man of great abilities in the various positions he had previously filled, and as honest

as he was patriotic. He had few personal enemies. His enemies were the leaders of the Federal party, if we except Aaron Burr, in whose honesty few believed. The lies which the bitter and hostile Federalists told about Jefferson were lost on the great majority of the people, who believed in him.

Jefferson was inaugurated as president in 1801, and selected an able Cabinet, with his friend and disciple James Madison as Secretary of State, and Albert Gallatin, an experienced financier, a Swiss by birth, as Secretary of the Treasury. He at once made important changes in all matters of etiquette and forms, introducing greater simplicity, abolishing levees, titles, and state ceremonials, and making himself more accessible to the people. His hospitality was greater than that of any preceding or succeeding president. He lived in the White House more like a Virginian planter than a great public functionary, wearing plain clothes, and receiving foreign ministers without the usual formalities, much to their chagrin. He also prevailed on Congress to reduce the army and navy, retaining a force only large enough to maintain law and order. He set the example of removing important officers hostile to his administration, although he did not make sweeping changes, as did General Jackson afterward, on the avowed ground that "spoils belong to victors," — thus increasing the bitterness of partisanship.

The most important act of Jefferson's administration was the purchase of Louisiana from France for fifteen millions of dollars. Bonaparte had intended, after that great territory had been ceded to him by Spain, to make a military colony at New Orleans, and thus control the Mississippi and its branches; but as he wanted money, and as his ambition centred in European conquests, he was easily won over by the American diplomatists to forego the possession of that territory, the importance of which he probably did not appreciate, and it became a part of the United States. James Monroe and Robert Livingston closed the bargain with the First Consul, and were promptly sustained by the administration, although they had really exceeded their instructions. Bonaparte is reported to have said of this transaction: "This accession of territory strengthens forever the power of the United States. I have given to England a maritime rival that will sooner or later humble her pride."

By this purchase, which Jefferson had much at heart, the United States secured, not only millions of square miles of territory, but the control of the Gulf of Mexico. This fortunate acquisition prevented those entangling disputes and hostilities which would have taken place whether Spain or France owned Louisiana. Doubtless, Jefferson laid himself open to censure from the Federalists for assuming unconstitutional powers

in this purchase; but the greatness of the service more than balanced the irregularity, and the ridicule and abuse from his political enemies fell harmless. No one can question that his prompt action, whether technically legal or illegal, was both wise and necessary; it practically gave to the United States the undisputed possession of the vast territory between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. Moreover, the President's enlightened encouragement of the explorations of Lewis and Clarke's expedition across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, led to the ultimate occupancy of California and the west coast itself.

The next event of national interest connected with the administration of Jefferson in his long term of eight years (for he was re-elected president, and began his second term in 1805), was the enterprise of Aaron Burr, with a view of establishing a monarchy in Mexico. It was fortunately defeated, and the disappointed and ambitious politician narrowly escaped being convicted of high treason. He was saved only by the unaccountable intrigues of the Federalists at a time of intense party warfare. Jefferson would have punished this unscrupulous intriguer if he could; but Burr was defended by counsel of extraordinary ability, — chiefly Federalist lawyers, at the head of whom was Luther Martin of Maryland, probably the best lawyer

in the country, notwithstanding his dissipated habits. Martin was one of those few drinking men whose brains are not clouded by liquor. He could argue a case after having drunk brandy enough to intoxicate any ordinary man, and be the brighter for it. Burr also brought to bear the resources of his own extraordinary intellect, by way of quiet suggestions to his counsel.

This remarkable man was born at Newark, N. J., in 1756, and was the son of the Rev. Aaron Burr, president of Princeton College. He was a grandson of the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, the most original and powerful metaphysical intellect known to the religious history of this country, who confirmed Calvinism as the creed of New England Puritans. The young Burr, on the death of his father and grandfather, inherited what was then considered as a fortune, and was graduated at Princeton in 1772, with no enviable reputation, being noted for his idleness and habits bordering on dissipation. He was a handsome and sprightly young man of sixteen, a favorite with women of all ages. He made choice of the profession of law, and commenced the study under Tappan Reeve of Elizabethtown. After the battle of Bunker Hill he entered the army at Boston, but, tired of inactivity, joined Arnold's expedition to Quebec, where he distinguished himself by his bravery. Ill health com-

pelled him leave the army after four years of service, — the youngest colonel in the army. He was no admirer of Washington, regarding him as "a farmer and Indian fighter rather than a soldier." He favored the cabal against him, headed by Gates and Conway. Washington, while ready to acknowledge Burr's military abilities, always distrusted him, and withheld from him the rank of brigadier.

On leaving the army, at the age of twenty-three, Burr resumed his studies of the law, and was admitted to the Albany bar after brief preparation. Conscious of his talents, he soon after settled in New York, and enjoyed a lucrative practice, the rival of Alexander Hamilton, being employed with him on all important cases. He had married, in 1782, the widow of an English officer, a Mrs. Provost, a lady older than he, — with uncommon accomplishments. In 1784 he was chosen a member of the New York Legislature, and was on intimate terms with the Clintons, the Livingstons, the Van Rennselaers, and the Schuylers. In 1789 he was made Attorney-General of the State during the administration of Governor George Clinton. His popularity was as great as were his talents, and in 1791 he was elected to the United States Senate over General Philip Schuyler, and became the leader of the Republican party, with increasing popularity and influence. In 1796 he was a presidential candidate, and

in 1800, being again a candidate for the presidency, he received seventy-three votes in the House of Representatives, — the same number that were cast for Jefferson. He would, doubtless, have been elected president but for the efforts of Hamilton, who threw his influence in favor of Jefferson, Democrat as he was, as the safer man of the two. Burr never forgave his rival at the bar for this, and henceforward the deepest enmity rankled in his soul for the great Federalist leader.

As Vice-President, Burr was marked for his political intrigues, and incurred the distrust if not the hostility of Jefferson, who neglected Burr's friends and bestowed political favors on his enemies. Disgusted with the inactivity to which his office doomed him, Burr pulled every wire to be elected governor of New York; but the opposition of the great Democratic families caused his defeat, which was soon followed by his assassination of Hamilton, called a duel. Universal execration for this hideous crime drove him for a time from New York, although he was still Vice-President. But his political career was ended, although his ambition was undiminished.

Then, seeing that his influence in the Eastern and Middle States was hopelessly lost, Burr looked for a theatre of new cabals, and turned his eyes to the West, opened to public view by the purchase of Louisiana.

In the preparation of his plans he went first to New Orleans, then a French settlement, where he was lionized, returning by way of Nashville, Frankfort, Lexington, and St. Louis. At the latter post he found General Wilkinson, to whom he communicated his scheme of founding an empire in the West, — a most desperate undertaking. On an island of the Ohio, near Marietta, he visited its owner, called Blennerhasset, a restless and worthless Irishman, whom he induced to follow his fortunes.

The adventurers contracted for fifteen boats and enlisted quite a number of people to descend the Mississippi and make New Orleans their rallying-point, supposing that the Western population were dissatisfied with the government and were ready to secede and establish a new republic, or empire, to include Mexico; also relying on the aid of General Wilkinson at St. Louis. But they miscalculated: Wilkinson was true to his colors; the people whom they had seduced gradually dropped off; the territorial magistrates became suspicious and alarmed, and the governor of the Territory communicated his fears to the President, who at once issued a proclamation to arrest the supposed conspirators, who had fled when their enterprise had failed.

Burr was seized near Natchez, and was tried for conspiracy; but the trial came to nothing. He con-

trived to escape in the night, but was again arrested in Alabama, and sent to Richmond to be tried for treason. As has been said, he was acquitted, by a jury of which John Randolph was foreman, with the sympathy of all the women, of whom he was a favorite to the day of his death. The trial lasted six months, and Jefferson did all he could to convict him, with the assistance of William Wirt, just rising into notice.

Although acquitted, Burr was a ruined man. His day of receptions and popularity was over. His sad but splendid career came to an inglorious close. Feeling unsafe in his own country, he wandered abroad, at times treated with great distinction wherever he went, but always arousing suspicions. He was obliged to leave England, and wandered as a fugitive from country to country, without money or real friends. At Paris and London he suffered extreme poverty, although admired in society. At last he returned to New York, utterly destitute, and resumed the practice of the law, but was without social position and generally avoided. He succeeded in 1832 in winning the hand of a wealthy widow, but he spent her money so freely that she left him. After the separation he supported himself with great difficulty, but retained his elegant manner and fascinating conversation, until he died in the house of a lady friend in 1836, and was buried at Princeton by the side of his father and grandfather.

Our history narrates no fall from an exalted position more melancholy, or more richly deserved than his. Without being dissipated, he was a bad and unprincipled man from the start. He might have been the pride of his country, like Hamilton and Jefferson being the equal of both in abilities, and at one time in popularity. The school-books have given to him and to Benedict Arnold an infamous immortality, comparing the one with Cain, and the other with Judas Iscariot.

The most important measure connected with Jefferson's long administration was the Non-importation Act, commonly called the Embargo. It proved in the end a mistake, and shed no glory on the fame of the President; and yet it perhaps prevented a war, or at least delayed it.

The peace of 1783 and the acknowledgment of American independence did not restore friendly relations between England and the United States. It was not in human nature that a proud and powerful state like England should see the disruption of her empire and her fairest foreign possession torn from her without embittered feelings, leading to acts which could not be justified by international law or by enlightened reason. Accordingly, the government of Great Britain treated the American envoys with rudeness, insolence, and contempt, much to their chagrin and the indigna-

tion of Americans generally. It also adopted measures exceedingly injurious to American commerce. France and England being at war, the Americans, as neutrals, secured most of the carrying trade, to the disgust of British merchants; and, declaring mutual blockade, both French and English cruisers began to capture American trading-ships, the English being especially outrageous in their doings. Said Jefferson, in his annual message in 1805: "Our coasts have been infested and our harbors watched by private armed vessels. They have captured in the very entrance of our harbors, as well as on the high seas, not only the vessels of our friends coming to trade with us, but our own also. They have carried them off under pretence of legal adjudication; but not daring to approach a court of justice, they have plundered and sunk them by the way, or in obscure places where no evidence could arise against them, maltreated the crews, and abandoned them in boats in the open sea, or on desert shores without food or covering." In view of these things, the President recommended the building of gun-boats and the reorganization of the militia, and called attention to materials in the navy-yards for constructing battle-ships. The English even went further and set up a claim to the right of search; sailors were taken from American ships to be impressed into their naval service, on the plea — generally unfounded

— that they were British subjects and deserters. At last British audacity went so far as to attack an American frigate at Hampton Roads, and carry away four alleged British sailors, three of whom were American born. The English doctrine that no man could expatriate himself was not allowed by America, where immigrants and new citizens were always welcome; but in the case of native Americans there could be no question as to their citizenship. This outrage aroused indignation from one end of the country to the other, and a large party clamored for war.

But the policy of Jefferson was pacific. He abhorred war, and entered into negotiations, which came to nothing. Nor, to his mind, was the country prepared for war. We had neither army nor navy to speak of. It was plain that we should be beaten on the land and on the sea. Much as he hated England, he preferred to temporize, and build a few gun-boats, — which everybody laughed at.

Nor did the French government behave much better than the English. It looked upon the United States as an unsettled and weak country, to be robbed with impunity. At last, driven from the high seas, the Americans could rely only on the coasting-trade. "One half the mercantile world was sealed up by the British, and the other half by the French."

Jefferson now appealed to Congress, and the result

was the Non-importation Act, or Embargo, forbidding Americans to trade with France and England. This policy was intended as a pressure on English merchants. But it was a half-measure and did not affect British legislation, which had for its object the utter annihilation of American commerce. Neither France nor England was hurt seriously by the Embargo, while our ships lay rotting at the wharves, and our merchants found that their occupation was gone. The New England merchants were discouraged and discontented. It was not they who wished to see their ships shut up by a doubtful policy. They would have preferred to run risks rather than be idle. But Jefferson paid no heed to their grumblings, feeling that he was exhibiting to foreign powers unusual forbearance. It is singular that he persevered in a policy that nearly the whole body of merchants censured and regarded as a failure; but he did, and Congress was subservient to his decrees. No succeeding president ever had the influence over Congress that he had. He was almost a dictator. He found opposition only among the Federalists, whose power was gone forever.

At last, when the farmers and planters joined with the shipping interests in complaining of the Embargo, Jefferson was persuaded that it was a failure, and three days before his administration closed it was repealed by Congress. But even this measure did not

hurt the party which he had marshalled with such transcendent tact; for his friend and disciple, James Madison, was elected to succeed him in 1809.

The Embargo had had one result: it deferred the war with Great Britain to the next administration. That conflict of 1812–15 was not a glorious war for America except on the ocean. It was not entered upon by the British with any hope of the conquest of the country, but to do all the harm they could to the people who had achieved their independence. On the part of the United States it was simply a choice between insult, insolence, and injury on the one hand, and on the other the expenditure of money and loss of life, which would bear as hard on England as on the United States. Both parties at last wearied of a contest which promised no permanent settlement of interests or principles. The Federalists deprecated it from the beginning. The Republican-Democracy sustained it from the instinct of national honor. Probably it could not have been avoided without the surrender of national dignity. It was the last of our wars with Great Britain. Future difficulties will doubtless be settled by arbitration, or not settled at all, in spite of mutual ill-will. England and America cannot afford to fight. Our late Civil War demonstrated this, — when, with all the ill-feeling between the two nations, war was averted. The interests of trade may mollify and

soften international jealousies, but only forbearance and the cultivation of mutual and common interests can eradicate the sentiments of mutual dislike.

However, it was not the Embargo, nor the meditated treason of Aaron Burr, nor the purchase of Louisiana, important as these were, which gives chief interest to the eight years of Jefferson's administration, and made it a political epoch. It was the firm growth and establishment of the Democratic party, of which Jefferson was the father and leader, as Hamilton was the great chieftain of the Federalist. With the accession of Jefferson to power, a new policy was inaugurated, which from his day has been the policy of the government, except in great financial emergencies when men of brain have had the direction of public affairs. Democratic leaders like Jackson and Van Buren, representing the passions or interests or prejudices of the masses, it would seem, have been generally unfortunate enough to lead the country into financial difficulties, because they have conformed to the unenlightened instincts of the people rather than to the opinions of the enlightened few, — great merchants, capitalists, and statesmen, that is, men of experience and ability. And when these men of brain have extricated the country from the financial distress which men inexperienced in finance and ignorant of the principles of political economy have brought

about, the democratic leaders have regained their political ascendency, since they appealed, more than their antagonists, to those watchwords so dear to the American heart, the abolition of monopolies, unequal taxation, the exaltation of the laboring classes, — whatever promises to aggrandize the nation in a material point of view, or professes to bring about the reign of "liberty, fraternity, and equality," and the abolition of social distinctions.

It cannot be doubted that the policy of Jefferson, while it appealed to the rights and interests of "working-men," of men who labor with their hands rather than by their brains, has favored the reign of demagogues, — the great curse of American institutions. Who now rule the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, and Chicago? Is it not those who, in cities at least, have made self-government — the great principle for which Jefferson contended — almost an impossibility? This great statesman was sufficiently astute to predict the rule of the majority for generations to come, but I doubt if he anticipated the character of the men to whom the majority would delegate their power. Here he was not so sagacious as his great political rivals. I believe that if he could have foreseen what a miserable set the politicians would generally turn out to be, — with their venality, their unscrupulousness, their

vile flatteries of the people, their system of spoils, their indifference to the higher interests of the nation, — his faith in democracy as a form of government would have been essentially shaken. He himself was no demagogue. His error was in not foreseeing the logical sequence of those abstract theories which made up his political religion, — the religion of humanity, such as the French philosophers had taught him. But his theories pleased the people, and he himself was personally popular, — the most so of all our statesmen, not excepting Henry Clay who made many enemies.

Jefferson's manners were simple, his dress was plain, he was accessible to everybody, he was boundless in his hospitalities, he cared little for money, his opinions were liberal and progressive, he avoided quarrels, he had but few prejudices, he was kind and generous to the poor and unfortunate, he exalted agricultural life, he hated artificial splendor, and all shams and lies. In his morals he was irreproachable, unlike Hamilton and Burr; he never made himself ridiculous, like John Adams, by egotism, vanity, and jealousy; he was the most domestic of men, worshipped by his family and admired by his guests; always ready to communicate knowledge, strong in his convictions, perpetually writing his sincere sentiments and beliefs in letters to his friends, — as upright and honest a

man as ever filled a public station, and finally retiring to private life with the respect of the whole nation, over which he continued to exercise influence after he had parted with power. And when he found himself poor and embarrassed in consequence of his unwise hospitality, he sold his library, the best in the country, to pay his debts, as well as the most valuable part of his estate, yet keeping up his cheerfulness and serenity of temper, and rejoicing in the general prosperity, — which was produced by the ever-expanding energies and resources of a great country, rather than by the political theories which he advocated with so much ability.

On his final retirement to Monticello, in 1809, after forty-four years of continuous public service, Jefferson devoted himself chiefly to the care of his estate, which had been much neglected during his presidential career. To his surprise he found himself in debt, having lived beyond his income while president. But he did not essentially change his manner of living, which was generous, though neither luxurious nor ostentatious. He had stalls for thirty-six horses, and sometimes as many as fifty guests at dinner. There was no tavern near him which had so much company. He complains that an ox would all be eaten in two days, while a load of hay would disappear in a night. Fond as he was of company, he

would not allow his guests to rob him of the hours he devoted to work, either in his library or on his grounds. His correspondence was enormous, — he received sixteen hundred and seven letters in one year, and answered most of them. After his death there were copies of sixteen thousand letters which he had written. His industry was marvellous; even in retirement he was always writing or reading or doing something. He was, perhaps, excessively fond of his garden, of his flowers, of his groves, and his walks. Music was, as he himself said, "the favorite passion of his soul." His house was the largest in Virginia, and this was filled with works of art, and the presents he had received. But his financial difficulties increased from year to year. He was too fond of experiments and fancy improvements to be practically successful as a farmer.

One of his granddaughters thus writes of him: "I cannot describe the feelings of veneration, admiration, and love that existed in my heart for him. I looked upon him as a being too great and good for my comprehension. I never heard him utter a harsh word to any one of us. On winter evenings, as we all sat round the fire, he taught us games, and would play them with us. He reproved without wounding us, and commended without making us vain. His nature was so eminently sympathetic that with those he loved

he could enter into their feelings, anticipate their wishes, gratify their tastes, and surround them with an atmosphere of affection."

Thus did he live in his plain but beautiful house, in sight of the Blue Ridge, with Charlottesville and the university at his feet. He rode daily for ten miles until he was eighty-two. He died July 4, 1825, full of honors, and everywhere funeral orations were delivered to his memory, the best of which was by Daniel Webster in Boston.

Among his papers was found the inscription which he wished to have engraved on his tomb: "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia." He does not allude to his honors or his offices, — not a word about his diplomatic career, or of his stations as governor of Virginia, Secretary of State, or President of the United States. But the three things he does name enshrine the best convictions of his life and the substance of his labors in behalf of his country, — political independence, religious freedom, and popular education.

The fame of Jefferson as author of the Declaration of Independence is more than supported by his writings at different times which bear on American freedom and the rights of man. It is as a writer on

political liberty that he is most distinguished. He was not an orator or speech-maker. He worked in his library among his books, meditating on the great principles which he enforced with so much lucidity and power. It was for his skill with the pen that he was selected to draft the immortal charter of American freedom, which endeared him to the hearts of the people, and which no doubt contributed largely to cement the States together in their resistance to Great Britain.

His reference to the statute of Virginia in favor of religious freedom illustrates another of his leading sentiments, to which he clung with undeviating tenacity during his whole career. He may have been a free-thinker like Franklin, but he did not make war on the religious beliefs of mankind; he only desired that everybody should be free to adopt such religious principles as were dear to him, without hindrance or molestation. He was before his age in liberality of mind, and he ought not to be stigmatized as an infidel for his wise toleration. Although his views were far from orthodox, they did not, after all, greatly differ from those of John Adams himself and the men of that day who were enamoured with the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau. At that time even the most influential of the clergy, especially in New England, were Arminians in their religious creed. The eighteenth

century was not a profound or religious epoch. It was an age of war and political agitations, — a drinking, swearing, licentious, godless age among the leaders of society, and of ignorance, prejudice, and pharisaic formalities among the people. Jefferson's own purity and uprightness of life amid the laxity of the times is an unquestionable evidence of the elevation of his character and the sincerity of his moral and religious beliefs.

The third great object of Jefferson's life was to promote popular education as an essential condition to the safety of the republic. While he advocated unbounded liberty, he knew well enough that it would degenerate into license unless the people were well informed. But what interested him the most was the University of Virginia, in whose behalf he spent the best part of his declining years. He gave money freely himself, and induced the legislature to endow it liberally. He superintended the construction of the buildings, which alone cost $300,000; he selected the professors, prescribed the course of study, was chairman of the board of trustees, and looked after the interests of the institution. He thought more of those branches of knowledge which tended to liberalize the mind than of Latin and Greek. He gave a practical direction to the studies of the young men, allowing them to select such branches as were congenial to them and would fit them for a useful life. He would have no presi-

dent, but gave the management of all details to the professors, who were equal in rank. He appealed to the highest motives among the students, and recognized them as gentlemen rather than boys, allowing no espionage. He was rigorous in the examinations of the students, and no one could obtain a degree unless it were deserved. While he did not exclude religion from the college, morning prayers being held every day, attendance upon religious services was not obligatory. Every Sunday some clergyman from the town or neighborhood preached a sermon, which was generally well attended. Few colleges in this country have been more successful or more ably conducted, and the excellence of instruction drew students from every quarter of the South. Before the war there were nearly seven hundred students, and I never saw a more enthusiastic set of young men, or a set who desired knowledge for the sake of knowledge more enthusiastically than did those in the University of Virginia.

Although it is universally admitted that Jefferson had a broad, original, and powerful intellect, that he stamped his mind on the institutions of his country, that to no one except Washington is the country more indebted, yet I fail to see that he was transcendently great in anything. He was a good lawyer, a wise legislator, an able diplomatist, a clear writer, and an

excellent president; but in none of the spheres he occupied did he reach the most exalted height. As a lawyer he was surpassed by Adams, Burr, and Marshall; as an orator he was nothing at all; as a writer he was not equal to Hamilton and Madison in profundity and power; as a diplomatist he was far below Franklin and even Jay in tact, in patience, and in skill; as a governor he was timid and vacillating; while as a president he is not to be compared with Washington for dignity, for wisdom, for consistency, or executive ability. Yet, on the whole, he has left a great name for giving shape to the institutions of his country, and for intense patriotism. Pre-eminent in no single direction, he was in the main the greatest political genius that has been elevated to the presidential chair; but perhaps greater as a politician than as a statesman in the sense that Pitt, Canning, and Peel were statesmen. He was not made for active life; he was rather a philosopher, wielding power by his pen, casting his searching glance into everything, and leading men by his amiability, his sympathetic nature, his force of character, and his enlightened mind. The question might arise whether Jefferson's greatness was owing to force of circumstances, or to an original, creative intellect, like that of Franklin or Alexander Hamilton. But for the Revolution he might never have been heard of outside his native State

This, however, might be said of most of the men who have figured in American history, — possibly of Washington himself. The great rulers of the world seem to be raised up by Almighty Power, through peculiar training, to a peculiar fitness for the accomplishment of certain ends which they themselves did not foresee, — men like Abraham Lincoln, who was not that sort of man whom Henry Clay or Daniel Webster would probably have selected for the guidance of this mighty nation in the greatest crisis of its history.

AUTHORITIES.

The Life of Jefferson by Parton is the most interesting that I have read and the fullest, but not artistic. He introduces much superfluous matter that had better be left out. As for the other Lives of Jefferson, that by Morse is the best; that of Schouler is of especial interest as to Jefferson's attitude toward slavery and popular education. Randall has written an interesting sketch. For the rest, I would recommend the same authorities as on John Adams in the previous chapter.

LXXVIII.

ANDREW JACKSON.

PERSONAL POLITICS.

1767–1845.

LXXVIII.

ANDREW JACKSON.

PERSONAL POLITICS.

IT is very seldom that a man arises from an obscure and humble position to an exalted pre-eminence, without peculiar fitness for the work on which his fame rests, and which probably no one else could have done so well. He may not be learned, or cultured; he may be even unlettered and rough; he may be stained by vulgar defects and vices which are fatal to all dignity of character; but there must be something about him which calls out the respect and admiration of those with whom he is surrounded, so as to give him a start, and open a way for success in the business or enterprise where his genius lies.

Such a man was Andrew Jackson. Whether as a youth, or as a man pursuing his career of village lawyer in the backwoods of a frontier settlement, he was about the last person of whom one would predict that he should arise to a great position and unbounded national popularity. His birth was plebeian and

obscure. His father, of Scotch-Irish descent, lived in a miserable hamlet in North Carolina, near the South Carolina line, without owning a single acre of land, — one of the poorest of the poor whites. The boy Andrew, born shortly after his father's death in 1767, was reared in poverty and almost without education, learning at school only to "read, write, and cipher;" nor did he have any marked desire for knowledge, and never could spell correctly. At the age of thirteen he was driven from his native village by its devastation at the hands of the English soldiers, during the Revolutionary War. His mother, a worthy and most self-reliant woman, was an ardent patriot, and all her boys — Hugh, Robert, and Andrew — enlisted in the local home-guard. The elder two died, Hugh of exposure and Robert of prison small-pox, while Andrew, who had also been captured and sick of the disease, survived this early training in the scenes of war for further usefulness. The mother made her way on foot to Charleston, S. C., to nurse the sick patriots in the prison-ships, and there died of the prison fever, in 1781. The physical endurance and force of character of this mother constituted evidently the chief legacy that Andrew inherited, and it served him well through a long and arduous life.

At fifteen the boy was "a homeless orphan, a sick and sorrowful orphan," working for a saddler in

Charleston a few hours of the day, as his health would permit. With returning strength he got possession of a horse; but his army associates had led him into evil ways, and he became indebted to his landlord for board. This he managed to pay only by staking his horse in a game of dice against $200, which he fortunately won; and this squared him with the world and enabled him to start afresh, on a better way.

Poor and obscure as he was, and imperfectly educated, he aspired to be a lawyer; and at eighteen years of age he became a law-student in the office of Mr. Spruce McCay in Salisbury, North Carolina. Two years later, in 1787, he was admitted to the bar. Not making much headway in Salisbury, he wandered to that part of the State which is now Tennessee, then an almost unbroken wilderness, exposed to Indian massacres and depredations; and finally he located himself at Nashville, where there was a small settlement, — chiefly of adventurers, who led lives of license and idleness.

It seems that Jackson, who was appointed district-attorney, had a considerable practice in his profession of a rough sort, in that frontier region where the slightest legal knowledge was sufficient for success. He was in no sense a student, like Jefferson and Madison in the early part of their careers in Virginia as village

lawyers, although he was engaged in as many cases, and had perhaps as large an income as they. But what was he doing all this while, when he was not in his log-office and in the log-court-room, sixteen feet square? Was he pondering the principles or precedents of law, and storing his mind with the knowledge gained from books? Not at all. He was attending horse-races and cock-fightings and all the sports which marked the Southern people one hundred years ago; and his associates were not the most cultivated and wealthy of them either, but ignorant, rough, drinking, swearing, gambling, fighting rowdies, whose society was repulsive to people of taste, intelligence, and virtue.

The young lawyer became a favorite with these men, and with their wives and sisters and daughters. He could ride a horse better than any of his neighbors; he entered into their quarrels with zeal and devotion; he was bold, rash, and adventurous, ever ready to hunt a hostile Indian, or fight a duel, or defend an innocent man who had suffered injury and injustice. He showed himself capable of the warmest and most devoted friendship as well as the bitterest and most unrelenting hatred. He was quick to join a dangerous enterprise, and ever showing ability to lead it, — the first on the spot to put out a fire; the first to expose himself in a common danger; commanding respect for his honesty, sincerity, and integrity; exciting fear from

his fierce wrath when insulted, — a man terribly in earnest; always as courteous and chivalric to women as he was hard and savage to treacherous men. Above all, he was now a man of commanding stature, graceful manners, dignified deportment, and a naturally distinguished air; so that he was looked up to by men and admired by women. What did those violent, quarrelsome, adventurous settlers on the western confines of American civilization care whether their favorite was learned or ignorant, so long as he was manifestly superior to them in their chosen pursuits and pleasures, was capable of leading them in any enterprise, and sympathized with them in all their ideas and prejudices, - a born democrat, as well as a born leader. His claim upon them, however, was not without its worthy elements. He was perfectly fearless in enforcing the law, laughing at intimidation. He often had to ride hundreds of miles to professional duties on circuit, through forests infested by Indians, and towns cowed by ruffians; and he and his rifle were held in great respect. He was renowned as the foremost Indian fighter in that country, and as a prosecuting attorney whom no danger and no temptation could swerve from his duty. He was feared, trusted, and boundlessly popular.

The people therefore rallied about this man. When in 1796 a convention was called for framing a State

constitution, Jackson was one of their influential delegates; and in December of that year he was sent to Congress as their most popular representative. Of course he was totally unfitted for legislative business, in which he never could have made any mark. On his return in 1797, a vacancy occurring in the United States Senate, he was elected senator, on the strength of his popularity as representative But he remained only a year at Philadelphia, finding his calling dull, and probably conscious that he had no fitness for legislation, while the opportunity for professional and pecuniary success in Tennessee was very apparent to him.

Next we read of his being made chief-justice of the Superior Court of Tennessee, with no more fitness for administering the law than he had for making it, or interest in it. Mr. Parton tells an anecdote of Jackson at this time which, whether true or not, illustrates his character as well as the rude conditions amid which he made himself felt. He was holding court in a little village in Tennessee, when a great, hulking fellow, armed with a pistol and bowie-knife, paraded before the little court-house, and cursed judge, jury, and all assembled. Jackson ordered the sheriff to arrest him, but that functionary failed to do it, either alone or with a posse. Whereupon Jackson caused the sheriff to summon *him* as posse, adjourned court

for ten minutes, walked out and told the fellow to yield or be shot.

In telling why he surrendered to one man, when he had defied a crowd, the ruffian afterwards said: "When he came up I looked him in the eye, and I saw *shoot*. There was n't *shoot* in nary other eye in the crowd. I said to myself, it is about time to sing small; and so I did."

It was by such bold, fearless conduct that Jackson won admiration, — not by his law, of which he knew but little, and never could have learned much. The law, moreover, was uncongenial to this man of action, and he resigned his judgeship and went for a short time into business, — trading land, selling horses, groceries, and dry goods, — when he was appointed major-general of militia. This was just what he wanted. He had now found his place and was equal to it. His habits, enterprises, dangers, and bloody encounters, all alike fitted him for it. Henceforth his duty and his pleasure ran together in the same line. His personal peculiarities had made him popular; this popularity had made him prominent and secured to him offices for which he had no talent, seeing which he dropped them; but when a situation was offered for which he was fitted, he soon gained distinction, and his true career began.

It was as an Indian fighter that he laid the founda-

tion of his fame. His popularity with rough people was succeeded by a series of heroic actions which brought him before the eyes of the nation. There was no sham in these victories. He fairly earned his laurels, and they so wrought on the imagination of the people that he quickly became famous.

But before his military exploits brought him a national reputation he had become notorious in his neighborhood as a duellist. He was always ready to fight when he deemed himself insulted. His numerous duels were very severely commented on when he became a candidate for the presidency, especially in New England. But duelling was a peculiar Southern institution; most Southern people settled their difficulties with pistols. Some of Jackson's duels were desperate and ferocious. He was the best shot in Tennessee, and, it is said, could lodge two successive balls in the same hole. As early as 1795 he fought with a fellow lawyer by the name of Avery. In 1806 he killed in a duel Charles Dickinson, who had spoken disparagingly of his wife, whom he had lately married, a divorced woman, but to whom he was tenderly attached as long as she lived. Still later he fought with Thomas H. Benton, and received a wound from which he never fully recovered.

Such was the life of Jackson until he was forty-five years of age, — that of a violent, passionate, arbitrary man, beloved as a friend, and feared as an enemy.

It was the Creek war and the war with England which developed his extraordinary energies. When the war of 1812 broke out he was major-general of Tennessee militia, and at once offered his services to the government, which were eagerly accepted, and he was authorized to raise a body of volunteers in Tennessee and to report with them at New Orleans. He found no difficulty in collecting about sixteen hundred men, and in January, 1813, took them down the Cumberland, the Ohio, and Mississippi to Natchez, in such flat-bottomed boats as he could collect; another body of mounted men crossed the country five hundred miles to the rendezvous, and went into camp at Natchez, Feb. 15, 1813.

The Southern Department was under the command of General James Wilkinson, with headquarters at New Orleans, — a disagreeable and contentious man, who did not like Jackson. Through his influence the Tennessee detachment, after two months' delay in Natchez, was ordered by the authorities at Washington to be dismissed, — without pay, five hundred miles from home. Jackson promptly decided not to obey the command, but to keep his forces together, provide at his own expense for their food and transportation, and take them back to Tennessee in good order. He accomplished this, putting sick men on his own three horses, and himself marching on foot

with the men, who, enthusiastic over his elastic toughness, dubbed him "Old Hickory," — a title of affection that is familiar to this day. The government afterwards reimbursed him for his outlay in this matter, but his generosity, self-denial, energy, and masterly force added immensely to his popularity.

Jackson's disobedience of orders attracted but little attention at Washington, in that time of greater events, while his own patriotism and fighting zeal were not abated by his failure to get at the enemy. And very soon his desires were to be granted.

In 1811, before the war with England was declared, a general confederation of Indians had been made under the influence of the celebrated Tecumseh, a chief of the Shawanoe tribe. He was a man of magnificent figure, stately and noble as a Greek warrior, and withal eloquent. With his twin brother, the Prophet, Tecumseh travelled from the Great Lakes in the North to the Gulf of Mexico, inducing tribe after tribe to unite against the rapacious and advancing whites. But he did not accomplish much until the war with England broke out in 1812, when he saw a possibility of realizing his grand idea; and by the summer of 1813 he had the Creek nation, including a number of tribes, organized for war. How far he was aided by English intrigues is not fully known, but he doubtless received encouragement from English

agents. From the British and the Spaniards, the Indians received arms and ammunition.

The first attack of these Indians was on August 13, 1813, at Fort Mims, in Alabama, where there were nearly two hundred American troops, and where five hundred people were collected for safety. The Indians, chiefly Creeks, were led by Red Eagle, who utterly annihilated the defenders of the fort under Major Beasley, and scalped the women and children. When reports of this unexpected and atrocious massacre reached Tennessee the whole population was aroused to vengeance, and General Jackson, his arm still in a sling from his duel with Benton, set out to punish the savage foes. But he was impeded by lack of provisions, and quarrels among his subordinates, and general insubordination. In surmounting his difficulties he showed extraordinary tact and energy. His measures were most vigorous. He did not hesitate to shoot, whether legally or illegally, those who were insubordinate, thus restoring military discipline, the first and last necessity in war. Soldiers soon learn to appreciate the worth of such decision, and follow such a leader with determination almost equal to his own. Jackson's troops did splendid marching and fighting.

So rapid and relentless were his movements against the enemy that the campaign lasted but seven months,

and the Indians were nearly all killed or dispersed. I need not enumerate his engagements, which were regarded as brilliant. His early dangers and adventures, and his acquaintance with Indian warfare ever since he could handle a rifle, now stood him in good stead. On the 21st of April, 1814, the militia under his command returned home victorious, and Jackson for his heroism and ability was made a major-general in the regular army, he then being forty-seven years of age. It was in this war that we first hear of the famous frontiersman Davy Crockett, and of Sam Houston, afterwards so unique a figure in the war for Texan independence. In this war, too, General Harrison gained his success at Tippecanoe, which was never forgotten; but his military genius was far inferior to that of Jackson. It is probable that had Jackson been sent to the North by the Secretary of War, he would have driven the British troops out of Canada. There is no question about his military ability, although his reputation was sullied by high-handed and arbitrary measures. What he saw fit to do, he did, without scruples or regard to consequences. In war everything is tested by success; and in view of that, if sufficiently brilliant, everything else is forgotten.

The successful and rapid conquest of the Creeks opened the way for Jackson's Southern campaign against the English. As major-general he was sent

to conclude a treaty with the Indians, which he soon arranged, and was then put in command of the Southern Division of the army, with headquarters at Mobile. The English made the neutral Spanish territory of Florida a basis of operations along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, thus putting in peril both Mobile and New Orleans. They virtually possessed Pensacola, the Spanish force being too feeble to hold it, and made it the rendezvous of their fleets. The Spanish authorities made a show, indeed, of friendship with the United States, but the English flag floated over the forts of the city, and the governor was in sympathy with England. Such was the state of affairs when Jackson arrived at Mobile at the head of parts of three regiments of regulars, with a thousand miles of coast to defend, and without a fort adequately armed or garrisoned. He applied to the Secretary of War for permission to take Pensacola; but the government hesitated to attack a friendly power without further knowledge of their unfriendly acts, and the delayed response, ordering caution and waiting, did not reach him. Thrown upon his own resources, asking for orders and getting none, he was obliged to act without instructions, in face of vastly superior forces. And for this he can scarcely be blamed, since his situation demanded vigorous and rapid measures, before they could be indorsed by the Secretary of War.

Pensacola, at the end of a beautiful bay, ten miles from the sea, with a fine harbor, was defended by Fort Barrancas, six miles from the town. Before it lay eight English men-of-war at anchor, the source of military supplies for the fort, on which floated the flags of both England and Spain. The fleet was in command of Captain Lord Percy, whose flagship was the "Hermes," while Colonel Nichols commanded the troops. This latter boastful and imprudent officer was foolish enough to issue a proclamation to the inhabitants of Louisiana and Kentucky to take up arms against their country. A body of Indians were also drilled in the service of the British, so far as Indians can be drilled to regular warfare.

As soon as the true intentions of the English were known to General Jackson, who had made up his mind to take possession of Pensacola, he wrote to the Spanish governor, — a pompous, inefficient old grandee, — and demanded the surrender of certain hostile Creek chieftains, who had taken refuge in the town.

The demand was haughtily rejected. Jackson waited until three thousand Tennessee militia, for whom he had urgently sent, arrived at Mobile, under the command of General Coffee, one of his efficient coadjutors in the Creek War, and Colonel Butler, and then promptly and successfully stormed Pensacola, driving out the British, who blew up Fort Barrancas and

escaped to their ships. After which he retired to Mobile to defend that important town against the British forces, who threatened an attack.

The city of Mobile could be defended by fortifications on Mobile Point, thirty miles distant, at the mouth of the bay, since opposite it was a narrow channel through which alone vessels of any considerable size could enter the bay. At this point was Fort Bowyer, in a state of dilapidation, mounting but a few pieces of cannon. Into this fort Jackson at once threw a garrison of one hundred and sixty regular infantry under Major Lawrence, a most gallant officer. These troops were of course unacquainted with the use of artillery, but they put the fort in the best condition they could, and on the 12th of September the enemy appeared, the fleet under Captain Percy, and a body of marines and Indians under Colonel Nichols. Jackson, then at Mobile, apprised of the appearance of the British, hastily reinforced the fort, about to be attacked by a large force confident of success. On the 15th of September the attack began; the English battered down the ramparts of the fortifications, and anchored their ships within gun-shot of the fort; but so gallant was the defence that the ships were disabled, and the enemy retreated, with a loss of about one hundred men. This victory saved Mobile; and more, it gave confidence to the small army on whom

the defence of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico depended.

Jackson forthwith issued his bulletins or proclamations in a truly Napoleonic style to the inhabitants of Louisiana, to rally to the defence of New Orleans, which he saw would probably be the next object of attack on the part of the British. On the 2d of December he personally reached that city and made preparations for the expected assault, and, ably assisted by Edward Livingston, the most prominent lawyer of the city, enlisted for the defence the French creoles, the American residents, and a few Spaniards.

New Orleans was a prize which the English coveted, and to possess it that government had willingly expended a million of pounds sterling. The city not only controlled the commerce of the Mississippi, but in it were stored one hundred and fifty thousand bales of cotton, and eight hundred and ten thousand hogsheads of sugar, all of which the English government expected to seize. It contained at that time about twenty thousand people, — less than half of whom were whites, and these chiefly French creoles, — besides a floating population of sailors and traders

New Orleans is built on a bend in the Mississippi, in the shape of a horse-shoe, about one hundred miles from where by a sinuous southeasterly course the river empties into the Gulf of Mexico. At the city

the river was about a mile wide, with a current of four miles an hour, and back of the town was a swamp, draining to the north into Lake Ponchartrain, and to the east into Lake Borgne, which opens out into the Gulf east of the city. It was difficult for sailing-vessels at that time to ascend the river one hundred miles against the current, if forts and batteries were erected on its banks; and a sort of back entrance was afforded to the city for small vessels through lakes and lagoons at a comparatively short distance. On one of these lakes, Lake Borgne, a flotilla of light gun-boats was placed for defence, under the command of Lieutenant Jones, but on December 14th an overpowering force of small British vessels dispersed the American squadron, and on the twenty-second about fifteen hundred regulars, the picked men of the British army, fresh from European victories under Wellington, contrived to find their way unperceived through the swamps and lagoons to the belt of plantations between the river and the swamps, about nine miles below New Orleans.

When the news arrived of the loss of the gun-boats, which made the enemy the masters of Lake Borgne, a panic spread over the city, for the forces of the enemy were greatly exaggerated. But Jackson was equal to the emergency, though having but just arrived. He coolly adopted the most vigorous measures, and re-

stored confidence. Times of confusion, difficulty, and danger were always his best opportunities. He proclaimed martial law; he sent in all directions for reinforcements; he called upon the people to organize for defence; he released and enlisted the convicts, and accepted the proffered services of Jean Lafitte, the ex-"pirate" — or, rather, smuggler — of the Gulf, with two companies of his ex-buccaneers; he appealed to "the noble-hearted, generous, free men of color" to enlist, and the whole town was instantly transformed into a military camp. Within a fortnight he had five thousand men, one-fifth regulars and the rest militia. General Jackson's address to his soldiers was spirited but inflated, encouraging and boastful, with a great patriotic ring, and, of course effective The population of the city was united in resolving to make a sturdy defence.

Had the British marched as soon as they landed, they probably would have taken the city, in the existing consternation. But they waited for larger forces from their ships, which carried six thousand troops, and in their turn exaggerated the number of the defenders, which at the first were only about two thousand badly frightened men. The delay was a godsend to the Americans, who now learned the strength of the enemy.

On the 23d — as always, eager to be at his enemy,

and moving with his characteristic energy — Jackson sent a small force down to make a night attack on the British camp; also a schooner, heavily armed with cannon, to co-operate from the river. It was a wild and inconsequent fight; but it checked the advance of the British, who now were still more impressed with the need of reinforcements; it aroused the confidence and fighting spirit of the Americans, and it enabled Jackson to take up a defensive line behind an old canal, extending across the plain from river to swamp, and gave him time to fortify it. At once he raised a formidable barricade of mud and timber, and strengthened it with cotton-bales from the neighboring plantations. The cotton, however, proved rather a nuisance than a help, as it took fire under the attack, and smoked, annoying the men. The "fortifications of cotton-bales" were only a romance of the war.

On the 25th arrived Sir Edwin Packenham, brother-in-law of Wellington and an able soldier, to take command, and on the 28th the British attacked the extemporized but strong breastworks, confident of success. But the sharp-shooters from the backwoods of Tennessee under Carroll, and from Kentucky under Coffee, who fought with every advantage, protected by their mud defences, were equally confident The slaughter of the British troops, utterly unprotected though brave and gallant, was terrible, and they were

repulsed. Preparations were now made for a still more vigorous, systematic, and general assault, and a force was sent across the river to menace the city from that side.

On the 8th of January the decisive battle was fought which extinguished forever all dreams of the conquest of America, on the part of the British. General Packenham, who commanded the advancing columns in person, was killed, and their authorities state their loss to have been two thousand killed, wounded, and missing. The American loss was eight killed and thirteen wounded. It was a rash presumption for the British to attack a fortified entrenchment ten feet high in some places, and ten feet thick, with detached redoubts to flank it and three thousand men behind it. The conflict was not strictly a battle, — not like an encounter in the open field, where the raw troops under Jackson, most of them militia, would have stood no chance with the veterans whom Wellington had led to victory and glory.

Jackson's brilliant defence at New Orleans was admirably planned and energetically executed. It had no effect on the war, for the treaty of peace, although not yet heard of, had been signed weeks before; but it enabled America to close the conflict with a splendid success, which offset the disasters and mistakes of the Northern campaigns. Naturally, it was magnified into

a great military exploit, and raised the fame of Jackson to such a height, all over the country, that nothing could ever afterwards weaken his popularity, no matter what he did, lawful or unlawful. He was a victor over the Indians and over the English, and all his arbitrary acts were condoned by an admiring people who had but few military heroes to boast of.

His successes had a bad effect on Jackson himself. He came to feel that he had a right to ride over precedents and law when it seemed to him expedient. He set up his will against constituted authorities, and everybody who did not endorse his measures he regarded as a personal enemy, to be crushed if possible. It was never said of him that he was unpatriotic in his intentions, only that he was wilful, vindictive, and ignorant. From the 8th of January, 1815, to the day of his death he was the most popular man that this country ever saw, — excepting, perhaps, Washington and Lincoln, — the central figure in American politics, with prodigious influence even after he had finally retired from public life. Immediately after the defence of New Orleans the legislatures of different States, and Congress itself, passed grateful resolutions for his military services, and the nation heaped all the honor on the hero that was in its power to give,— medals, swords, and rewards, and Congress remitted a fine which had been imposed by Judge Hall, in New

Orleans, for contempt of court. Jackson's severity in executing six militia-men for mutiny was approved generally as a wholesome exercise of military discipline, and all his acts were glorified. Wherever he went there was a round of festivities. He began to be talked about, as soon as the war was closed, as a candidate for the presidency, although when the idea was first proposed to him he repelled it with genuine indignation.

Scarcely had the British troops been withdrawn from the Gulf of Mexico to fight more successfully at Waterloo, when Jackson was called to put an end to the Seminole war in Florida, which Spanish territory he occupied on the ground of self-defence. The Indians — Seminoles and Creeks — with many runaway negroes, had been pillaging the border of Georgia. Jackson drove them off, seized the Spanish fort on Appalachee Bay, and again took possession of Pensacola on the plea that the Spanish officials were aiding the Indians. It required all the skill of the government at Washington to defend his despotic acts, for he was as complete an autocrat in his limited sphere as Cæsar or Napoleon. The only limits he regarded were the limits to his power. But in whatever he did, he had a firm conviction that he was right. Even John Quincy Adams justified his acts in Florida, when his enemies were loud in their complaints of his needless

executions, especially of two British traders, Arbuthnot and Ambruter, whom he had court-martialled and shot as abettors of the Indians. He had invaded the territory of a neutral power and driven off its representatives; but everything was condoned. And when, shortly after, Florida became United States territory by purchase from Spain, he was made its first governor, — a new field for him, but an appointment which President Monroe felt it necessary to make.

In April, 1821, having resigned his commission in the army, Jackson left Nashville with his family to take up his residence in Pensacola, enchanted with its climate and fruits and flowers, its refreshing sea-breezes, and its beautiful situation, in spite of hot weather. As governor of Florida he was invested with extraordinary powers. Indeed, there was scarcely any limit to them, except that he had no power to levy and collect taxes, and seize the property of the mixed races who dwelt in the land of oranges and flowers. It would appear that, aside from arbitrary acts, he did all he could for the good of the territory, under the influence of his wife, a Christian woman, whom he indulged in all things, especially in shutting up grog-shops, putting a stop to play-going, and securing an outward respect for the Sabbath. His term of office, however, was brief, and as his health was poor, for he was never vigorous, in November of the same year he gladly

returned to Nashville, and about this time built his well-known residence, the "Hermitage." As a farmer he was unusually successful, making agriculture lucrative even with slave labor.

Jackson had now become a prominent candidate for the presidency, and as a part of the political plan, he was, in 1823, made senator from Tennessee in Congress, where he served parts of two terms, without, however, distinguishing himself as a legislator. He made but few speeches, and these were short, but cast his vote on occasions of importance, voting against a reduction of duty on iron and woollen and cotton goods, against imprisonment for debt, and favoring some internal improvements. In 1824 he wrote a letter advocating a "careful tariff," so far as it should afford revenues for the national defence, and to pay off the national debt, and "give a proper distribution of our labor;" but a tariff to enrich capitalists at the expense of the laboring classes, he always abhorred.

The administration of James Monroe, in two full terms, from 1817 to 1825, had not been marked by any great events or popular movements of especial historical interest. It was "the era of good feeling." The times were placid, and party animosities had nearly subsided. The opening of the slavery discussions resulted in the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and the irritations of that great topic were allayed for

the time. Like all his predecessors after Washington, Monroe had been successively a diplomatist and Secretary of State, and the presidency seemed to fall to him as a matter of course. He was a most respectable man, although not of commanding abilities, and discharged his duties creditably in the absence of exciting questions. The only event of his administration which had a marked influence on the destinies of the United States was the announcement that the future colonization of the country by any European State would not be permitted. This is called the "Monroe doctrine," and had the warm support of Webster and other leading statesmen. It not only proclaimed the idea of complete American independence of all foreign powers, but opposed all interference of European States in American affairs. The ultimate influence of the application of this doctrine cannot be exaggerated in importance, whether it originated with the President or not. Monroe was educated for the bar, but was neither a good speaker nor a ready writer. Nor was he a man of extensive culture or attainments. The one great idea attributed to him was: "America for the Americans." He was succeeded, however, by a man of fine attainments and large experience, who had passed through the great offices of State with distinguished credit.

In February, 1824, Jackson was almost unanimously

nominated for the presidency by the Democratic party, through the convention in Harrisburg, and John C. Calhoun was nominated for the vice-presidency. Jackson's main rivals in the election which followed were John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, both of whom had rendered great civil services, and were better fitted for the post. But Jackson was the most popular, and he obtained ninety-nine electoral votes, Adams eighty-four, and Clay thirty-seven. No one having a majority, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. Clay, who never liked nor trusted Jackson, threw his influence in favor of Adams, and Adams was elected by the vote of thirteen States. Jackson and his friends always maintained that he was cheated out of the election, — that Adams and Clay made a bargain between themselves, — which seemed to be confirmed by the fact that Clay was made Secretary of State in Adams's cabinet; although this was a natural enough sequence of Clay's throwing his political strength to make Adams president. Jackson returned, wrathful and disappointed, to his farm, but amid boisterous demonstrations of respect wherever he went. If he had not cared much about the presidency before, he was now determined to achieve it, and to crush his opponents, whom he promptly regarded as enemies.

John Quincy Adams entered upon office in 1825,

free from "personal obligations" and "partisan entanglements," but with an unfriendly Congress. This, however, was not of much consequence, since no great subjects were before Congress for discussion. It was a period of great tranquillity, fitted for the development of the peaceful arts, and of internal improvements in the land, rather than of genius in the presidential chair. Not one public event of great importance occurred, although many commercial treaties were signed, and some internal improvements were made. Mr. Adams lived in friendly relations with his cabinet, composed of able men, and he was generally respected for the simplicity of his life, and the conscientious discharge of his routine duties. He was industrious and painstaking, rising early in the morning and retiring early in the evening. He was not popular, being cold and austere in manner, but he had a lofty self-respect, disdaining to conciliate foes or reward friends, — a New England Puritan of the severest type, sternly incorruptible, learned without genius, eloquent without rhetoric, experienced without wisdom, religious without orthodoxy, and liberal-minded with strong prejudices.

Perhaps the most marked thing in the political history of that administration was the strife for the next presidency, and the beginning of that angry and bitter conflict between politicians which had no cessa-

tion until the Civil War. The sessions of Congress were occupied in the manufacture of political capital; for a cloud had arisen in the political heavens, portending storms and animosities, and the discussion of important subjects of national scope, such as had not agitated the country before, — pertaining to finances, to tariffs, to constitutional limitations, to retrenchments, and innovations. There arose new political parties, or rather a great movement, extending to every town and hamlet, to give a new impetus to the Democratic sway. The leaders in this movement were the great antagonists of Clay and Webster, — a new class of politicians, like Benton, Amos Kendall, Martin Van Buren, Duff Green, W. B. Lewis, and others. A new era of "politics" was inaugurated, with all the then novel but now customary machinery of local clubs, partisan "campaign newspapers," and the organized use of pledges and promises of appointments to office to reward "workers." This system had been efficiently perfected in New York State under Mr. Van Buren and other leaders, but now it was brought into Federal politics, and the whole country was stirred into a fever heat of party strife.

In a political storm, therefore, Jackson was elected, and commenced his memorable reign in 1829, — John Quincy Adams retiring to his farm in disgust and wrath. The new president was carried into office on

an avalanche of Democratic voters, receiving two hundred and sixty-one electoral votes, while Adams had only eighty-three, notwithstanding his long public services and his acknowledged worth. This was too great a disappointment for the retiring statesman to bear complacently, or even philosophically. He gave vent to his irritated feelings in unbecoming language, exaggerating the ignorance of Jackson and his general unfitness for the high office, — in this, however, betraying an estimate of the incoming President which was common among educated and conservative men. I well remember at college the contempt which the president and all the professors had for the Western warrior. It was generally believed by literary men that "Old Hickory" could scarcely write his name.

But the speeches of Jackson were always to the point, if not studied and elaborate, while his messages were certainly respectable, though rather too long. It is generally supposed that he furnished the rough draughts to his few intimate friends, who recast and polished them, while some think that William Lewis, Amos Kendall, and others wrote the whole of them, as well as all his public papers. In reading the early letters of Jackson, however, it is clear that they are anything but illiterate, whatever mistakes in spelling and grammatical errors there may be. His ideas were distinct, his sentiments unmistakable; and although he

was fond of a kind of spread-eagle eloquence, his views on public questions were generally just and vigorously expressed. A Tennessee general, brought up with horse-jockeys, gamblers, and cock-fighters, and who never had even a fair common-school education, could not be expected to be very accomplished in the arts of composition, whatever talents and good sense he naturally may have had. Certain it is that Jackson's mind was clear and his convictions were strong upon the national policy to be pursued by him; and if he opposed banks and tariffs it was because he believed that their influence was hostile to the true interests of the country. He doubtless well understood the issues of great public questions; only, his view of them was contrary to the views of moneyed men and bankers and the educated classes of his day generally. It is to be remarked, however, that the views he took on questions of political economy are now endorsed by many able college professors and some American manufacturers who are leading public opinion in opposition to tariffs for protection and in the direction of free trade.

The first thing for Jackson to do after his inauguration was to select his cabinet. It was not a strong one. He wanted clerks, not advisers. He was all-sufficient to himself. He rarely held a cabinet meeting. In a very short time this cabinet was dissolved

by a scandal. General Eaton, Secretary of War, had married the daughter of a tavern-keeper, who was remarkable for her wit and social brilliancy. The aristocratic wives of the cabinet ministers would not associate with her, and the President took the side of the neglected woman, in accordance with his chivalric nature His error was in attempting to force his cabinet to accord to her a social position, — a matter which naturally belonged to women to settle. So bitter was the quarrel, and so persistent was the President in attempting to produce harmony in his cabinet on a mere social question that the ministers resigned rather than fight so obstinate and irascible a man as Jackson in a matter which was outside his proper sphere of action.

The new cabinet was both more able and more subservient. Edward Livingston of Louisiana, who wrote most of Jackson's documents when he commanded in New Orleans, was made Secretary of State, Louis McLane of Delaware, Secretary of the Treasury; Lewis Cass, governor for nineteen years of Michigan, Secretary of War; Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, Secretary of the Navy; Roger B. Taney of Maryland, Attorney-General, — all distinguished for abilities. But even these able men were seldom summoned to a cabinet meeting. The confidential advisers of the President were Amos Kendall, afterwards Postmaster-

General; Duff Green, a Democratic editor; Isaac Hill, a violent partisan, who edited a paper in Concord, New Hampshire, and was made second auditor of the treasury; and William B. Lewis, an old friend of the general in Tennessee, — all able men, but unscrupulous politicians, who enjoyed power rather than the display of it. These advisers became known in the party contests of the time as the president's "Kitchen Cabinet."

Jackson had not been long inaugurated before the influence of the "Kitchen Cabinet" was seen and felt; for it was probably through the influence of these men that the President brought about a marked change in the policy of the government; and it is this change which made Jackson's administration so memorable. It was the intrusion of personality, instead of public policy, into the management of party politics. Madison did not depart from the general policy of Jefferson, nor did Monroe. "The Virginia dynasty" kept up the traditions of the government as originally constituted. But Jackson cut loose from all traditions and precedents, especially in the matter of assuming responsibilities, and attempted to carry on the government independently of Congress in many important respects. It is the duty of the President to execute the laws as he finds them, until repealed or altered by the national Legislature; but it was the disposition of

Jackson to disregard those laws which he disapproved, — an encroachment hard to be distinguished from usurpation. And this is the most serious charge against him as President; not his ignorance, but his despotic temper, and his self-conceit in supposing himself wiser than the collected wisdom and experience of the representatives of the nation, — a notion which neither Washington nor Jefferson nor Madison ever entertained.

Again, Jackson's system of appointments to office — the removal of men already satisfactorily doing the work of the government, in order to make places for his personal and political supporters — was a great innovation, against all the experience of governments, whether despotic or constitutional. It led to the reign of demagogues, and gave rewards, not to those who deserved promotion from their able and conscientious discharge of duty in public trusts, but to those who most unscrupulously and zealously advocated or advanced the interests of the party in power. It led to perpetual rotations in office without reasonable cause, and made the election of party chiefs of more importance than the support of right principles. The imperfect civil service reforms which have been secured during the last few years with so much difficulty show the political mischief for which Jackson is responsible, and which has disgraced every succeed-

ing administration, — an evil so gigantic that no president has been strong enough to overcome it; not only injurious to the welfare of the nation by depriving it of the services of experienced men, but inflicting an onerous load on the President himself which he finds it impossible to shake off, — the great obstacle to the proper discharge of his own public duties, and the bar to all private enjoyment. What is more perplexing and irritating to an incoming president than the persistent and unreasonable demands of office-seekers, nine out of ten of whom are doomed to disappointment, and who consequently become enemies rather than friends of the administration?

This "spoils system" which Jackson inaugurated has proved fatal to all dignity of office, and all honesty in elections. It has divested politics of all attraction to superior men, and put government largely into the hands of the most venal and unblushing of demagogues. It has proved as great and fatal a mistake as has the establishment of universal suffrage which Jefferson encouraged, — a mistake at least in the great cities of the country, — an evil which can never be remedied except by revolution. Doubtless it was a generous impulse on the part of Jackson to reward his friends with the spoils of office, as it was a logical sequence of the doctrine of political equality to give every man a vote, whether virtuous or wicked,

intelligent or ignorant. Until Jackson was intrusted with the reins of government, no president of the United States, however inclined to reward political friends, dared to establish such a principle as rotation in office or removal without sufficient cause. Not one there was who would not have shrunk from such a dangerous precedent, a policy certain to produce an inferior class of public servants, and take away from political life all that is lofty and ennobling, except in positions entirely independent of presidential control, such as the national legislature.

The Senate, especially during Jackson's administration, was composed of remarkably gifted men, the most distinguished of whom opposed and detested the measures and policy he pursued, with such unbending obstinacy that he was filled with bitterness and wrath. This feeling was especially manifested towards Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, the great lights of the Senate Chamber, — although Jackson's party had the majority of both Houses much of the time, and thus, while often hindered, he was in the end unchecked in his innovations and hostilities. But these three giants he had to fight during most of his presidential career, which kept him in a state of perpetual irritation. Their opposition was to him a bitter pill. They were beyond his power, as independent as he. Until then, in his military and gubernatorial capacity,

his will had been supreme. He had no opponents whom he could not crush. He was accustomed to rule despotically. As president he could be defied and restrained by Congress. His measures had to be of the nature of recommendation, except in the power of veto which he did not hesitate to use unsparingly; but the Senate could refuse to ratify his appointments, and often did refuse, which drove him beyond the verge of swearing. Again, in the great questions which came up for discussion, especially those in the domain of political economy, there would be honest differences of opinion; for political economy has settled very little, and is not, therefore, strictly a science, any more than medicine is. It is a system of theories based on imperfect inductions. There can be no science except what is based on *indisputable* facts, or accepted principles. There are no incontrovertible doctrines pertaining to tariffs or financial operations, which are modified by circumstances.

The three great things which most signally marked the administration of Jackson were the debates on the tariffs, the quarrel with the United States Bank, and the Nullification theories of Calhoun. It would seem that Jackson, when inaugurated, was in favor of a moderate tariff to aid military operations and to raise the necessary revenue for federal expenses, but was opposed to high protective duties. Even in 1831

he waived many of his scruples as to internal improvements in deference to public opinion, and signed the bills which made appropriations for the improvement of harbors and rivers, for the continuation of the Cumberland road, for the encouragement of the culture of the vine and olive, and for granting an extended copyright to authors. It was only during his second term that his hostility to tariffs became a passion, — not from any well-defined views of political economy, for which he had no adequate intellectual training, but because "protection" was unpopular in the southwestern States, and because he instinctively felt that it favored monopolists at the expense of the people. What he hated most intensely were capitalists and moneyed institutions; like Jefferson, he feared their influence on elections. As he was probably conscious of his inability to grasp the complex questions of political economy, he was not bitter in his opposition to tariffs, except on political grounds. Hence, generally speaking, he left Congress to discuss that theme. We shall have occasion to look into it in the lecture on Henry Clay, and here only mention the great debates of Jackson's time on the subject, — a subject on which Congress has been debating for fifty years, and will probably be debating for fifty years to come, since the whole matter depends practically on changing circumstances, whatever may be the abstract theories of doctrinaires.

While Jackson, then, on the whole, left tariffs to Congress, he was not so discreet in matters of finance. His war with the United States Bank was an important episode in his life, and the chief cause of the enmity with which the moneyed and conservative classes pursued him to the end of his days. Had he let the Bank alone he would have been freed from most of the vexations and turmoils which marked his administration. He would have left a brighter name. He would not have given occasion for those assaults which met him on every hand, and which history justifies. He might even have been forgiven for his spoils system and unprecedented removals from office. In attacking the Bank he laid a profane touch upon a sacred ark and handled untempered mortar. He stopped the balance-wheel which regulated the finances of the country, and introduced no end of commercial disorders, ending in dire disasters. Like the tariff, finances were a question with which he was not competent to deal. His fault was something more than the veto on the recharter of the Bank by Congress, which he had a constitutional right to make; it was a vindictive assault on an important institution before its charter had expired, even in his first message to Congress. In this warfare we see unscrupulous violence, — prompted, not alone by his firm hostility to everything which looked like a monopoly and a

moneyed power, but by the influence of advisers who hated everything like inequality of position, especially when not usable for their own purposes. They stimulated his jealousy and resentments. They played on his passions and prejudices. They flattered him as if he were the monarch of the universe, incapable of a wrong judgment.

Hostility to the money power, however, is older than the public life of Jackson. It existed among the American democracy as early as the time of Alexander Hamilton. When he founded the first Bank of the United States he met with great opposition from the followers of Jefferson, who were jealous of the power it was supposed to wield in politics. When in 1810 the question came up of renewing the charter of the first United States Bank, the Democratic-Republicans were bitter in their opposition; and so effective was the outcry that the bank went into liquidation, its place being taken by local banks. These issued notes so extravagantly that the currency of the country, as stated by Professor Sumner, was depreciated twenty-five per cent. So great was the universal financial distress which followed the unsound system of banking operations that in 1816 a new bank was chartered, on the principles which Hamilton had laid down.

This Bank was to run for twenty years, and its capital was thirty-five millions of dollars, seven of

which were taken by the United States; many of its stockholders were widows, charitable institutions, and people of small means. Its directors were chosen by the stockholders with the exception of five appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. The public money was deposited in this Bank; it could be removed by the Secretary of the Treasury, but by him only on giving his reasons to Congress. The Bank was located in Philadelphia, then the money-centre of the country, but it had twenty-five branches in different cities, from Portsmouth, N. H., to New Orleans. The main institution could issue notes, not under five dollars, but the branches could not. Langdon Cleves, of South Carolina, was the first president, succeeded in 1823 by Nicholas Biddle, of Philadelphia, — a man of society, of culture, and of leisure, — a young man of thirty-seven, who could talk and write, perhaps, better than he could manage a great business.

The affairs of the Bank went on smoothly for ten or twelve years, and the financial condition of the country was never better than when controlled by this great central institution. Nicholas Biddle of course was magnified into a great financier of uncommon genius, — the first business man in the whole country, a great financial autocrat, the idol of Philadelphia. But he was hated by Democratic politicians

as a man who was intrusted with too much power, which might be perverted to political purposes, and which they asserted was used to help his aristocratic friends in difficulty. Moreover, they looked with envy on the many positions its offices afforded, which, as it was a "government institution," they thought should be controlled by the governing party.

Among Biddle's especial enemies were the members of the "Kitchen Cabinet," who with sycophantic adroitness used Jackson as a tool.

Isaac Hill, of New Hampshire, was one of the most envenomed of these politicians, who hated not only Biddle but those who adhered to the old Federalist party, and rich men generally. He had sufficient plausibility and influence to enlist Levi Woodbury, Senator from New Hampshire, to forward his schemes.

In consequence, Woodbury, on June 27, 1829, wrote to Ingham, Secretary of the Treasury, making complaints against the president of the branch bank in Portsmouth for roughness of manner, partiality in loans, and severity in collections. The accused official was no less a man than Jeremiah Mason, probably the greatest lawyer in New England, if not of the whole country, the peer as well as the friend of Webster. Ingham sent Woodbury's letter to Biddle, intimating that it was political partiality that was complained of. Then ensued a correspondence between

Biddle and Ingham, — the former defending Mason and claiming complete independence for the Bank as to its management, so long as it could not be shown to be involved in political movements, and the latter accusing, threatening to remove deposits, attempting to take away the pension agency from the Portsmouth branch, *et cetera*. It was a stormy summer for the Bank

Thus things stood until November, when a letter appeared in the New York "Courier and Inquirer," stating that President Jackson, in his forthcoming first annual message to Congress, would come out strongly against the Bank itself And sure enough, the President, in his message, astonished the whole country by a paragraph attacking the Bank, and opposing its recharter. The part of the message about the Bank was referred to both Houses of Congress. The committees reported in favor of the Bank, as nothing could be said against its management. Again, in the message of the President in 1830, he attacked the Bank, and Benton, one of the chief supporters of Jackson in spite of their early duel, declared in the Senate that the charter of the Bank ought not to be renewed Here the matter dropped for a while, as Jackson and his friends were engrossed in electioneering schemes for the next presidential contest, and the troubles of the cabinet on account of the Eaton scandal had to be

attended to. As already noted, they ended in its dissolution, followed by a new and stronger cabinet, in which Ingham was succeeded as Secretary of the Treasury by Louis McLane.

It was not till 1832, — the great session of Jackson's administrations, — that the contest was taken up again. The Bank aimed to have its charter renewed, although that would not expire for five years yet; and as the Senate was partly hostile to the President, it seemed a propitious time for the effort. Jackson, on the other hand, fearing that the Bank would succeed in getting its charter renewed with a friendly Congress, redoubled his energies to defeat it. The more hostile the President showed himself, the more eager were the friends of the Bank for immediate action. It was, with them, now or never. If the matter were delayed, and Jackson were re-elected, it would be impossible to secure a renewal of the charter, while it was hoped that Jackson would not dare to veto the charter on the eve of a presidential election, and thus lose, perhaps, the vote of the great State of Pennsylvania. So it was resolved by the friends of the Bank to press the measure.

Five months were consumed in the discussion of this important matter, in which the leading members of the Senate, except Benton, supported the Bank. The bill to renew the charter passed the Senate on the

11th of June, by a vote of twenty-eight to twenty, and the House on the 3d of July by a majority of thirty-three. It was immediately vetoed by the President, on the ground that the Bank was an odious monopoly, with nearly a third of its stock held by foreigners, and not only odious, but dangerous as a money-power to bribe Congress and influence elections. The message accompanying the veto was able, and was supposed to be written by Edward Livingston or Amos Kendall. Biddle remained calm and confident. Like Clay, he never dreamed that Jackson would dare to persist in a hostility against the enlightened public sentiment of the country. But Jackson was the idol of the Democracy, who would support all his measures and condone all his faults, and the Democracy ruled, — as it always will rule, except in great public dangers, when power naturally falls into the hands of men of genius, honesty, and experience, almost independently of their political associations.

The veto aroused a thunder of debate, Webster and Clay leading the assault upon it, and Benton, with other Jacksonians, defending it. The attempt to pass the re-charter bill over the veto failed of the necessary two-thirds majority, and the President was triumphant.

Jackson had no idea of yielding his opinions or his will to anybody, least of all to his political enemies. The war with the Bank must go on; but its charter

had three or four years still to run. All he could do legally was to cripple it by removing the deposits. His animosity, inflamed by the denunciations of Benton, Kendall, Blair, Hill, and others, became ungovernable.

McLane was now succeeded in the Treasury department by Mr. Duane of Philadelphia, the firmest and most incorruptible of men, for whom the President felt the greatest respect, but whom he expected to bend to his purposes as he had Ingham. Only the Secretary of the Treasury could remove the deposits, and this Mr. Duane unexpectedly but persistently refused to do. Jackson brought to bear upon him all his powers of persuasion and friendship; Duane still stood firm. Then the President resorted to threats, all to no purpose; at length Duane was dismissed from his office, and Roger B. Taney became Secretary of the Treasury, 23d of September, 1833. Three days afterwards, Taney directed collectors to deposit the public money in certain banks which he designated. It seems singular that the man who two years later was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and who discharged the duties of that office so ably and uprightly, should so readily have complied with the President's desire; but this must be accounted for by the facts that in regard to the Bank Taney's views were in harmony with those of Jackson, and that the removal of the deposits, however arbitrary, was not unconstitutional.

The removal of more than nine millions from the Bank within the period of nine months caused it necessarily to curtail its discounts, and a financial panic was the result, which again led to acrimonious debates in Congress, in which Clay took the lead. His opposition exasperated the President in the highest degree. Calhoun equalled Clay in the vehemence of his denunciation, for his hatred of Jackson was greater than his hostility to moneyed corporations. Webster was less irritating, but equally strong in his disapproval. Jackson, in his message of December, 1833, reiterated his charge against the Bank as "a permanent electioneering engine," attempting "to control public opinion through the distresses of some, and the fears of others." The Senate passed resolutions denouncing the high-handed measures of the government, which, however, were afterwards expunged when the Senate had become Democratic. One of the most eloquent passages that Clay ever uttered was his famous apostrophe to Vice President Van Buren when presiding over the Senate, in reference to the financial distress which existed throughout the country, and which, of course, he traced to the removal of the deposits. Deputations of great respectability poured in upon the President from every quarter to induce him to change his policy, — all of which he summarily and rudely dismissed. All that

these deputations could get out of him was, "Go to Nicholas Biddle; he has all the money." In 1834, during the second term of Jackson's office, there were committees sent to investigate the affairs of the Bank, who were very cavalierly treated by Biddle, so that their mission failed, amid much derision. He was not dethroned from his financial power until the United States Bank of Pennsylvania — the style under which the United States Bank accepted a State charter in 1836, when its original national charter expired — succumbed to the general crash in 1837.

It is now generally admitted that Jackson's war on the Bank was violent and reckless, although it would be difficult to point out wherein his hostility exceeded constitutional limits. The consequences were most disastrous to the immediate interests of the country, but probably not to its ultimate interests. The substitution of "pet banks" for government deposits led to a great inflation of paper money, followed by a general mania for speculation. When the bubble burst these banks were unable to redeem their notes in gold and silver, and suspended their payments. Then the stringency of the money market equalled the previous inflation. In consequence there were innumerable failures and everything fell in value, — lands, houses, and goods. Such was the general depression and scarcity of money that in many States it was

difficult to raise money even to pay necessary taxes. I have somewhere read that in one of the Western States the sheriffs sold at auction a good four-horse wagon for five dollars and fifty cents, two horses for four dollars, and two cows for two dollars. The Western farmers were driven to despair. Such was the general depression that President Van Buren was compelled in 1837 to call an extra session of Congress; nor were the difficulties removed until the celebrated Bankrupt Law was passed in 1840, chiefly through the efforts of Daniel Webster, which virtually wiped out all debts of those who chose to avail themselves of the privilege. What a contrast was the financial state of the country at that time, to what it was when Jackson entered upon his administration!

It is not just to attribute all the commercial disasters which followed the winding up of the old United States Bank to General Jackson, and to the financial schemes of Van Buren. It was the spirit of speculation, fostered by the inflation of paper money by irresponsible banks when the great balance-wheel was stopped, which was the direct cause. The indirect causes of commercial disaster, however, may be attributed to Jackson's war on the Bank. The long fight in Congress to secure a recharter of the Bank, though unsuccessful, was dignified and statesmanlike; but the ungoverned passions displayed by the removal of

deposits resulted in nothing, and could have resulted in nothing of advantage to any theory of the Bank's management; and it would be difficult to say who were most to blame for the foolish and undignified crimination and recrimination which followed, — the President, or the hostile Senate. It was, at any rate, a fight in which Jackson won, but which, from the animosities it kindled, brought down his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. It gave him a doubtful place in the history of the nation.

If Jackson's hostility to the United States Bank was inexpedient and violent, and resulted in financial disasters, his vigorous efforts to put down Nullification were patriotic, and called forth the approval and gratitude of the nation. This was a real service of immense value, and it is probable that no other public man then on the stage could have done this important work so well. Like all Jackson's measures, it was summary and decided.

Nullification grew out of the tariffs which Congress had imposed. The South wanted no protective duties at all; indeed, it wanted absolute free trade, so that planters might obtain the articles which they needed at the smallest possible cost, and sell as much cotton and tobacco as they could with the least delay and embarrassment. Professor Sumner argues that Southern industries either supported the Federal gov-

ernment, or paid tribute to the Northern manufacturers, and that consequently the grievances of the Southern States were natural and just, — that their interests were sacrificed to national interests, as the New England interests had been sacrificed to the national interests at the time of the Embargo. Undoubtedly, the South had cause of complaint, and we cannot wonder at its irritation and opposition to the taxes imposed on all for the protection of American manufactures. On the other hand, it was a grave question whether the interests of the nation at large should be sacrificed to build up the interests of the South, — to say nothing of the great moral issues which underlie all material questions. In other words, in matters of national importance, which should rule? Should the majority yield to the minority, or the minority to the majority? In accordance with the democratic principles on which this government is founded, there is only one reply to the question: The majority must rule. This is the basal stone of all constitutional government, whose disruption would produce revolution and anarchy. It is a bitter and humiliating necessity which compels the intellect, the wealth, the rank, and the fashion of England to yield to the small majority in the House of Commons, in the matter of Irish Home Rule, but an Irishman's vote is as good as that of the son of an

English peer. The rule of the majority is the price of political liberty, for which enlightened nations are willing to pay.

Henry Clay deserves great praise and glory for his persistent efforts at conciliation, — not only in matters pertaining to the tariff, but in the question of slavery to harmonize conflicting interests. But Calhoun — the greatest man whom the South has produced — would listen to no concessions, foreseeing that the slightest would endanger the institution with which the interests and pride of the Southern States were identified. At this crisis the country needed a man at the helm whose will was known to be inflexible.

In the session of 1830, on a question concerning the sales of public (U. S.) lands in the several States, arose the great debate between Colonel R. Y. Hayne, of South Carolina, and Daniel Webster on the limitations of Federal power; and Hayne's declaration of the right of a State to nullify a Federal law that was prejudicial to its interests gained him great applause throughout the South. John C. Calhoun, United States Senator from South Carolina, was at the head of the extreme State Sovereignty party, and at a banquet celebrating the birthday of Jefferson, January 13, 1830, he proffered the toast "The Union: next to Liberty, the most dear; may we all remember that it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of

the States, and distributing equally the benefit and burden of the Union." Jackson, as President, and practical chief of the Democracy, was of course present at this political banquet. His profound patriotism and keen political instinct scented danger, and with his usual impulse to go well forward to meet an enemy, he gave, "The Federal Union: it must be preserved." This simple declaration was worth more than all the wordy messages and proclamations he ever issued; it not only served notice upon the seceders of his time that they had a great principle to deal with, but it echoed after him, and was the call to which the nation victoriously rallied in its supreme struggle with treason, thirty years later.

Notwithstanding the evident stand taken by the President, the Calhoun party continued their opposition on State lines to the Federal authority. And when Congress passed the tariff of July, 1832, the South Carolina legislature in the autumn called a convention, which pronounced that Act and the Tariff Act of 1828 unconstitutional, — "null and void, and no law;" called on the State legislature to pass laws to prevent the execution of the Federal revenue acts; and declared that any attempt at coercion on the part of the Federal authorities would be regarded as absolving South Carolina and all its people from all further obligation to retain their union

with the other States, and that they should then forthwith proceed to organize a separate government, as a sovereign and independent State.

If such a man as Buchanan had then been in the presidential chair there probably would have been a Southern Confederacy; and in 1832 it might have been successful. But Jackson was a man of different mould. Democrat and Southern sympathizer as he was, he instantly took the most vigorous measures to suppress such a thing in the bud, before there was time to concert measures of disunion among the other Southern States. He sent General Scott to Charleston, with a body of troops stationed not far away. He ordered two war-vessels to the harbor of the misguided and rebellious city. On December 4 in his annual message he called the attention of Congress to the opposition to the revenue laws and intimated that he should enforce them. On December 11 he issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of South Carolina, written by Livingston, moderate in tone, in which it was set forth that the power of one State to annul a law of the United States was incompatible with the existence of the Union, and inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution. Governor Hayne issued a counter proclamation, while Calhoun resigned the vice-presidency in order to represent South Carolina on the floor of the Senate. In January the President sent

another message to Congress asking for authority to suppress rebellion.

Congress rallied around the Executive and a bill was passed providing for the enforcement of the collection of the customs at Charleston, and arming the President with extraordinary powers to see that the dangers were averted. Most of the States passed resolutions against Nullification, and there was general approval of the vigorous measures to be enforced if necessary. The Nullifiers, unprepared to resist the whole military power of the country, yielded, but with ill grace, to the threatened force. Henry Clay in February introduced a compromise tariff, and on the 27th of that month it was completed, together with an Enforcement Act. On March 3 it became a law, and on March 11 the South Carolina Nullifiers held an adjourned meeting of their convention and nullified their previous nullification. The triumph of Jackson was complete, and his popularity reached its apex.

It is not to be supposed that the collection of duties in Southern parts was the only cause of Nullification. The deeper cause was not at first avowed. It was the question of slavery, which is too large a topic to be discussed in this connection. It will be treated more fully in a subsequent lecture.

An important event took place during the administration of Jackson, which demands our notice,

although it can in no way be traced to his influence; and this was the Anti-Masonic movement, ending in the formation of a new political party.

The beginning of this party was obscure enough. One Morgan in Western New York was abducted and murdered for revealing the alleged secrets of Freemasonry. These were in reality of small importance, but Morgan had mortally offended a great secret society of which he was a member, by bringing it into public contempt. His punishment was greater than his crime, which had been not against morality, but against a powerful body of men who never did any harm, but rather much good in the way of charities. The outrage aroused public indignation, — that a man should be murdered for making innocent revelations of mere ceremonies and pretensions of small moment; and as the Masons would make no apologies, and no efforts to bring the offenders to justice, it was inferred by the credulous public that Masons were not fit to be entrusted with political office The outrage was seized upon by cunning politicians to make political capital. Jackson was a Mason. Hence the new party of Anti-Masons made war against him. As they had been his supporters, the Democratic party of the State of New York was divided.

The leading Democratic leaders had endeavored to suppress this schism; but it daily increased, founded

on popular ignorance and prejudice, until it became formidable. In 1830, four years after the murder, the Anti-Masons had held conventions and framed a political platform of principles, the chief of which was hostility to all secret societies. The party, against all reason, rapidly spread through New York, Pennsylvania, and New England, — its stronghold being among the farmers of Vermont. Ambitious politicians soon perceived that a union with this party would favor their interests, and men of high position became its leaders. In 1831 the party was strong enough to assemble a convention in Baltimore to nominate candidates for the presidency, and William Wirt, the great Maryland lawyer, was nominated, not with any hope of election, but with the view of dividing the ranks of the Democratic party, and of strengthening the opposition headed by Clay, — the National Republican party, which in the next campaign absorbed all the old Federalist remnants, and became the Whig party.

All opposition to Jackson, however, was to no purpose. He was elected for his second term, beginning in 1833. The Anti-Masonic movement subsided as rapidly as it was created, having no well-defined principles to stand upon. It has already passed into oblivion.

I have now presented the principal subjects which

made the administrations of Jackson memorable. There are others of minor importance which could be mentioned, like the removal of the Indians to remote hunting-grounds in the West, the West India trade, the successful settlement of the Spoliation Claims against France, which threatened to involve the country in war, — prevented by the arbitration of England; similar settlements with Denmark, Spain, and Naples; treaties of commerce with Russia and Turkey; and other matters in which Jackson's decided character appeared to advantage. But it is not my purpose to write a complete history of Jackson or of his administrations. Those who want fuller information should read Parton's long biography, in which almost every subject under the sun is alluded to, and yet which, in spite of its inartistic and unclassical execution, is the best thesaurus I know of for Jacksonian materials. More recent histories are dissertations in disguise, on disputed points.

Here, then, I bring this lecture to a close with a brief allusion to those things which made up the character of a very remarkable man, who did both good and evil in his public career. His private life is unusually interesting, by no means a model for others to imitate, yet showing great energy, a wonderful power of will, and undoubted honesty of purpose. His faults were those which may be traced to an

imperfect education, excessive prejudices, a violent temper, and the incense of flatterers, — which turned his head and of which he was inordinately fond. We fail to see in him the modesty which marked Washington and most of the succeeding presidents. As a young man he fought duels without sufficient provocation. He put himself in his military career above the law, and in his presidential career above precedents and customs, which subjected him to grave animadversion. As a general he hanged two respectable foreigners as spies, without sufficient evidence. He inflicted unnecessary cruelties in order to maintain military discipline, — wholesome, doubtless, but such as less arbitrary commanders would have hesitated to do. He invaded the territory of a neutral state on the plea of self-defence. In his conversation he used expletives not considered in good taste, and which might be called swearing, without meaning any irreverence to the Deity, although in later life he seldom used any other oath than "By the Eternal!"

Personally, Jackson's habits were irreproachable. In regard to the pleasures of the table he was temperate, almost abstemious. He was always religiously inclined and joined the Church before he died, — perhaps, however, out of loyalty to his wife, whom he adored, rather than from theological convictions. But whatever he deemed his duty, he made every sacrifice to

perform. Although fond of power, he was easily accessible, and he was frank and genial among his intimate friends. With great ideas of personal dignity, he was unconventional in all his habits, and detested useless ceremonies and the etiquette of courts. He put a great value on personal friendships, and never broke them except under necessity. For his enemies he cherished a vindictive wrath, as unforgiving as Nemesis.

In the White House Jackson was remarkably hospitable, and he returned to his beloved Hermitage poorer than when he left it. He cared little for money, although an excellent manager of his farm. He was high-minded and just in the discharge of debts, and, although arbitrary, he was indulgent to his servants.

He loved frankness in his dealings with advisers, although he was easily imposed upon. While he leaned on the counsels of his "Kitchen Cabinet" he rarely summoned a council of constitutional advisers. He parted with one of the ablest and best of his cabinet who acted from a sense of duty in a matter where he was plainly right. Toward Nicholas Biddle and Henry Clay he cherished the most inexorable animosity for crossing his path.

When we remember his lack of political knowledge, his "spoils system," his indifference to internal improvements, his war on the United States Bank, and

his arbitrary conduct in general, we feel that Jackson's elevation to the presidency was a mistake and a national misfortune, however popular he was with the masses. Yet he was in accord with his generation.

It is singular that this man did nothing to attract national notice until he was forty-five years of age. The fortune of war placed him on a throne, where he reigned as a dictator, so far as his powers would allow. Happily, in his eventful administration he was impeded by hostile and cynical senators; but this wholesale restraint embittered his life. His great personal popularity continued to the end of his life in 1845, but his influence is felt to this day, both for good and for evil. His patriotism and his prejudices, his sturdy friendships and his relentless hatreds, his fearless discharge of duty and his obstinacy of self-will, his splendid public services and the vast public ills he inaugurated, will ever make this picturesque old hero a puzzle to moralists. His life was turbulent, and he was glad, when the time came, to lay down his burden and prepare himself for that dread Tribunal before which all mortals will be finally summoned, — the one tribunal in which he believed, and the only one which he was prompt to acknowledge.

AUTHORITIES.

The works written on Jackson are very numerous. Probably the best is the biography written by Parton, defective as it is. Professor W. E. Sumner's work, in the series of "American Statesmen," is full of interesting and important facts, especially in the matters of tariff and finance. See also Benton's Thirty Years in the United States Senate; Cobbett's Life of Jackson; Curtis's Life of Webster; Colton's Life and Times of Thomas Clay, as well as Carl Schurz on the same subject; Von Holst, Life of Calhoun; Memoir of John Quincy Adams; Tyler's Life of Taney; Sargent's Public Men; the Speeches of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun.

LXXIX.

HENRY CLAY.

COMPROMISE LEGISLATION.

1777–1852.

LXXIX.

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ALL the presidents of the United States, with the exception of three or four, must yield in influence to Henry Clay, so far as concerns directing the policy, and shaping the institutions of this country. Only two other American statesmen — Hamilton and Webster — can be compared to him in genius, power, and services. These have been already treated in another volume.[1]

In regard to what is called "birth," Clay was not a patrician, like Washington, nor had he so humble an origin as Andrew Jackson or Abraham Lincoln. Like most other great men, he was the architect of of his own fortunes, doomed to drudgeries in the early part of his career, and climbing into notice by energy and force of character.

[1] *Beacon Lights of History*, Volume IV., "Great Warriors and Statesmen."

He was born, 1777, in a little Virginian hamlet called the "Slashes," in Hanover County, the son of a Baptist minister, who preached to poor people, and who died when Henry was four years old, leaving six other children and a widow, with very scanty means of support. The little country school taught him "the rudiments," and his small earnings as plough-boy and mill-boy meantime helped his mother. The mother was marked by sterling traits of character, and married for her second husband a Captain Watkins, of Richmond. This worthy man treated his step-son kindly, and put him into a retail store at the age of fourteen, no better educated than most country lads, — too poor to go to college, but with aspirations, which all bright and ambitious boys are apt to have, especially if they have no fitness for selling the common things of life, and are fond of reading. Henry's step-father, having an influential friend, secured for the disgusted and discontented youth a position in the office of the Clerk of the High Court of Chancery, of which the eminent jurist, George Wythe, was chancellor. The judge and the young copyist thus naturally became acquainted, and acquaintance ripened into friendship, for the youth was bright and useful, and made an excellent amanuensis to the learned old lawyer, in whose office both Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall had been students of law.

After serving four years, Clay resolved to become a lawyer, entered the office of the Attorney-General of the State, and one year after was admitted to the bar, having in all probability acquired much legal knowledge from the communicative Chancellor, whom everybody loved and honored, — one of the earliest in Virginia to emancipate his slaves, and provide for their support. The young fellow's reading, also, had been guided by his learned friend, in the direction of history, English grammar, and the beginnings of law.

The young lawyer, with his pleasing manners, quick intelligence, and real kindness of heart soon became a favorite in Richmond society. He was neither handsome, nor elegant, nor aristocratic, but he had personal geniality, wit, brilliancy in conversation, irreproachable morals, and was prominent in the debating society, — a school where young men learn the art of public speaking, like Gladstone at Oxford. It is thought probable that Clay's native oratorical ability, which he assiduously cultivated, — the gift which, as Schurz says, "enabled him to make little tell for much, and to outshine men of vastly greater learning," — misled him as to the necessity for systematic and thorough study. Lack of thoroughness and of solid information was his especial weakness through life, in spite of the charm and power of his personal oratory.

It is always up-hill work for a young lawyer to

succeed in a fashionable city, where there is more intellect than business, and when he himself has neither family, nor money, nor mercantile friends. So Henry Clay, at twenty-one, turned his eyes to the West, — the land of promise, which was especially attractive to impecunious lawyers, needy farmers, spendthrift gentlemen, merchants without capital, and vigorous men of enterprise, — where everybody trusts and is trusted, and where talents and character are of more value than money. He had not much legal knowledge, nor did he need much in the frontier settlements on the Ohio and its valleys; the people generally were rough and illiterate, and attached more importance to common-sense and industry than to legal technicalities and the subtle distinctions of Coke and Blackstone. If an advocate could grasp a principle which appealed to consciousness, and enforce it with native eloquence, he was more likely to succeed than one versed in learned precedents without energy or plausible utterances.

The locality which Clay selected was Lexington in Kentucky, — then a small village in the midst of beautiful groves without underbrush, where the soil was of virgin richness, and the landscape painted with almost perpetual verdure; one of the most attractive spots by nature on the face of the earth, — a great contrast to the flat prairies of Illinois, or the tangled

forests of Michigan, or the alluvial deposits of the Mississippi. It was a paradise of hills and vales, easily converted into lawns and gardens, such as the primitive settlers of New England would have looked upon with blended envy and astonishment.

Lexington in 1797, the year that Clay settled in it as a lawyer, was called "the intellectual centre of the Far West," as the Ohio valley was then regarded. In reality it was a border-post, the inhabitants of which were devoted to horse-racing, hunting, and whiskey-drinking, with a sprinkling of educated people, among whom the young lawyer soon distinguished himself, — a born orator, logical as well as rhetorical.

Clay's law practice at first was chiefly directed to the defence of criminals, and it is said that no murderer whom he defended was ever hanged; but he soon was equally successful in civil cases, gradually acquiring a lucrative practice, without taking a high rank as a jurist. He was never a close student, being too much absorbed in politics, society, and pleasure, except on rare occasions, for which he "crammed." His reading was desultory, and his favorite works were political speeches, many of which he committed to memory and then declaimed, to the delight of all who heard him. His progress at the bar must have been remarkably rapid, since within two years he could afford to purchase six hundred acres of land, near

Lexington, and take unto himself a wife, — domestic, thrifty, painstaking, who attended to all the details of the farm, which he called "Ashland." As he grew in wealth, his popularity also increased, until in all Kentucky no one was so generally beloved as he. Yet he would not now be called opulent, and he never became rich, since his hospitalities were disproportionate to his means, and his living was more like that of a Virginia country gentleman than of a hard-working lawyer.

At this time Clay was tall, erect, commanding, with long arms, small hands, a large mouth, blue, electrical eyes, high forehead, a sanguine temperament, excitable, easy in his manners, self-possessed, courteous, deferential, with a voice penetrating and musical, with great command of language, and so earnest that he impressed everybody with his blended sincerity and kindness of heart.

The true field for such a man was politics, which Clay loved, so that his duties and pleasures went hand in hand, — an essential thing for great success. His first efforts were in connection with a constitutional convention in Kentucky, when he earnestly advocated a system of gradual emancipation of slaves, — unpopular as that idea was among his fellow-citizens. It did not seem, however, to hurt his political prospects, for in 1803 he was solicited to become a member of the State legis-

lature, and was easily elected, being a member of the Democratic-Republican party as led by Jefferson. He made his mark at once as an orator, and so brilliant and rapid was his legislative career that he was elected in 1806 to the United States Senate to fill the unexpired term of John Adair, — being only twenty-nine years old, the youngest man that ever sat in that body of legislators. All that could then be said of him was that he made a good impression in the debates and on the committees, and was a man of great promise, a favorite in society, attending all parties of pleasure, and never at home in the evening. On his return to Kentucky he was again elected as a member of the lower House in the State legislature, and chosen Speaker, — an excellent training for the larger place he was to fill. In the winter of 1809–10 he was a second time sent to the United States Senate, for two years, to fill the unexpired term of Buckner Thurston, where he made speeches in favor of encouraging American manufacturing industries, not to the extent of exportation, — which he thought should be confined to surplus farm-produce, — but enough to supply the people with clothing and to make them independent of foreign countries for many things unnecessarily imported. He also made himself felt on many other important topics, and was recognized as a rising man.

When his term had expired in the Senate, he was

chosen a member of the House of Representatives at Washington, — a more agreeable field to him than the Senate, as giving him greater scope for his peculiar eloquence. He was promptly elected Speaker, which position, however, did not interfere with his speech-making whenever the House went into Committee of the Whole. It was as Speaker of the House of Representatives that Clay drew upon himself the eyes of the nation; and his truly great congressional career began in 1811, on the eve of the war with Great Britain in Madison's administration.

Clay was now the most influential, and certainly the most popular man in public life, in the whole country, which was very remarkable, considering that he was only thirty-seven years of age. Daniel Webster was then practising law in Portsmouth, N. H., two years before his election to Congress, and John C. Calhoun had not yet entered the Senate, but was chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations in the House of Representatives, and a warm friend of the Speaker.

The absorbing subject of national interest at that time was the threatened war with England, which Clay did his best to bring about, and Webster to prevent. It was Webster's Fourth-of-July Oration at Portsmouth in 1812 which led to his election to Congress as a Federalist, in which oration he deprecated war. The West generally was in favor of it,

having not much to lose or to fear from a contest which chiefly affected commerce, and which would jeopardize only New England interests and the safety of maritime towns. Clay, who had from his first appearance at Washington made himself a champion of American interests, American honor, and American ideas generally, represented the popular party, and gave his voice for war, into which the government had drifted under pressure of the outrages inflicted by British cruisers, the impressment of our seamen, and the contempt with which the United States were held and spoken of on all occasions by England, — the latter an element more offensive to none than to the independent and bellicose settlers in Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Clay is generally credited with having turned the scales in favor of the war with Great Britain, when the United States comprised less than eight millions of people, when the country had no navy of any account, and a very small army without experienced officers, while Great Britain was mistress of the seas, with an enormous army, and the leader of the allied Powers that withstood Napoleon in Spain and Portugal. To the eyes of the Federalists, the contest was rash, inexpedient, and doubtful in its issues; and their views were justified by the disasters that ensued in Canada, the incompetency of Hull, the successive

defeats of American generals with the exception of Jackson, and the final treaty of peace without allusion to the main causes which had led to the war. But the Republicans claimed that the war, if disastrous on the land, had been glorious on the water; that the national honor had been vindicated; that a navy had been created; that the impressment of American seamen was practically ended forever; and that England had learned to treat the great republic with outward respect as an independent, powerful, and constantly increasing empire.

As the champion of the war, and for the brilliancy and patriotism of his speeches, all appealing to the national heart and to national pride, Clay stood out as the most eminent statesman of his day, with unbounded popularity, especially in Kentucky, where to the last he retained his hold on popular admiration and affection. His speeches on the war are more marked for pungency of satire and bitterness of invective against England than for moral wisdom. They are appeals to passions rather than to reason, of great force in their day, but of not much value to posterity. They are not read and quoted like Webster's masterpieces. They will not compare, except in popular eloquence, with Clay's own subsequent efforts in the Senate, when he had more maturity of knowledge, and more insight into the principles of political economy.

But they had great influence at the time, and added to his fame as an orator.

In the summer of 1814 Clay resigned his speakership of the House of Representatives to accept a diplomatic mission as Peace Commissioner to confer with commissioners from Great Britain. He had as associates John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Jonathan Russell, and Albert Gallatin — the ablest financier in the country after the death of Hamilton. The Commissioners met at Ghent, and spent five tedious months in that dull city. The English commissioners at once took very high ground, and made imperious demands, — that the territory now occupied by the States of Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and a part of Ohio should be set apart for the Indians under an English protectorate; that the United States should relinquish the right of keeping armed vessels on the great Lakes; that a part of Maine should be ceded to Great Britain to make a road from Halifax to Quebec, and that all questions relating to the right of search, blockades, and impressment of seamen should remain undiscussed as before the war. At these preposterous demands Clay was especially indignant. In fact, he was opposed to any treaty at all which should not place the United States and Great Britain on an equality, and would not have been grieved if the war had lasted three years longer. Adams and Gallatin had their

hands full to keep the Western lion from breaking loose and returning home in disgust, while they desired to get the best treaty they could, rather than no treaty at all. Gradually the British commissioners abated their demands, and gave up all territorial and fishery claims, and on December 14, 1814, concluded the negotiations on the basis of things before the war, — the *status quo ante bellum*. Clay was deeply chagrined. He signed the document with great reluctance, and always spoke of it as "a damned bad treaty," since it made no allusion to the grievance which provoked the war which he had so eloquently advocated.

Gallatin and Clay spent some time in Paris, and most of the ensuing summer in London on further negotiations of details. But Clay had no sooner returned to Lexington than he was re-elected to the national legislature, where he was again chosen Speaker, December 4, 1815, having declined the Russian mission, and the more tempting post of the Secretary of War. He justly felt that his arena was the House of Representatives, which, as well as the Senate, had a Republican majority. It was his mission to make speeches and pull political wires, and not perplex himself with the details of office, which required more executive ability and better business habits than he possessed, and which would seriously interfere with

his social life. How could he play cards all night if he was obliged to be at his office at ten o'clock in the morning, day after day, superintending clerks, and doing work which to him was drudgery? Much more pleasant to him was it to preside over stormy debates, appoint important committees, write letters to friends, and occasionally address the House in Committee of the Whole, when his voice would sway the passions of his intelligent listeners; for he had the power "to move to pity, and excite to rage."

Besides all this, there were questions to be discussed and settled by Congress, important to the public, and very interesting to politicians. The war had bequeathed a debt. To provide for its payment, taxes must be imposed. But all taxation is unpopular. The problem was, to make taxes as easy as possible. Should they be direct or indirect? Should they be imposed for a revenue only, or to stimulate and protect infant manufactures? The country was expanding; should there be national provision for internal improvements, — roads, canals, etc.? There were questions about the currency, about commerce, about the Indians, about education, about foreign relations, about the territories, which demanded the attention of Congress. The most important of these were those connected with revenues and tariffs.

It was this latter question, connected with internal

improvements and the sales of public lands, in which Clay was most interested, and which, more than any other, brought out and developed his genius. He is generally quoted as "the father of the protective policy," to develop American manufactures. The genius of Hamilton had been directed to the best way to raise a revenue for a new and impoverished country; that of Clay sought to secure independence of those foreign products which go so far to enrich nations.

Webster, when reproached for his change of views respecting tariffs, is said to have coolly remarked that when he advocated the shipping interest he represented a great commercial city; and when he afterwards advocated tariffs, he spoke as the representative of a manufacturing State, — a sophistical reply which showed that he was more desirous of popularity with his constituents than of being the advocate of abstract truth.

Calhoun advocated the new tariff as a means to advance the cotton interests of the South, and the defence of the country in time of war. Thus neither of the great political leaders had in view national interests, but only sectional, except Clay, whose policy was more far-reaching. And here began his great career as a statesman. Before this he was rather a politician, greedy of popularity, and desirous to make friends.

The war of 1812 had, by shutting out foreign products, stimulated certain manufactures difficult to import, but necessary for military operations, like cheap clothing for soldiers, blankets, gunpowder, and certain other articles for general use, especially such as are made of iron. When the war closed and the ports opened, the country received a great inflow of British products. Hence the tariff of 1816, the earliest for protection, imposed a tax of about thirty-five per cent on articles for which the home industry was unable to supply the demand, and twenty per cent on coarse fabrics of cotton and wool, distilled spirits, and iron; while those industries which were in small demand were admitted free or paid a mere revenue tax. This tariff, substantially proposed by George M. Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury, was ably supported by Clay. But his mind was not yet fully opened to the magnitude and consequences of this measure, — his chief arguments being based on the safety of the country in time of war. In this movement he joined hands with Calhoun, one of his warmest friends, and one from whose greater logical genius he perhaps drew his conclusions.

At that time party lines were not distinctly drawn. The old Federalists had lost their prestige and power. The Republicans were in a great majority; even John Quincy Adams and his friends swelled their ranks.

Jefferson had lost much of his interest in politics, and was cultivating his estates and building up the University of Virginia. Madison was anticipating the pleasures of private life, and Monroe, a plain, non-committal man, the last of "the Virginia dynasty," thought only of following the footsteps of his illustrious predecessors, and living in peace with all men.

The next important movement in Congress was in reference to the charter of the newly proposed second United States Bank, and in this the great influence of Clay was felt. He was in favor of it, as a necessity, in view of the miserable state of the finances, the suspension of specie payments, and the multiplication of State banks. In the earlier part of his career, in 1811, he had opposed a recharter of Hamilton's National Bank as a dangerous money-corporation, and withal unconstitutional on the ground that the general government had no power to charter companies. All this was in accordance with Western democracy, ever jealous of the money-power, and the theorizing proclivities of Jefferson, who pretended to hate everything which was supported in the old country. But with advancing light and the experience of depreciated currency from the multiplication of State banks, Clay had changed his views, exposing himself to the charge of inconsistency; which, however, he met with engaging candor, claiming rather

credit for his ability and willingness to see the change of public needs. He now therefore supported the bill of Calhoun, which created a national bank with a capital of thirty-five million dollars, substantially such as was proposed by Hamilton. The charter was finally given in April, 1816, to run for twenty years.

Doubtless such a great money-corporation — great for those times — did wield a political influence, and it might have been better if the Bank had been chartered with a smaller capital. It would have created fewer enemies, and might have escaped the future wrath of General Jackson. Webster at first opposed the bill of Calhoun; but when it was afterwards seen that the Bank as created was an advantage to the country, he became one of its strongest supporters. Webster was strongly conservative by nature; but when anything was established, like Lord Thurlow he ceased all opposition, especially if it worked well.

In 1816 James Monroe was elected President, and Clay expected to be made Secretary of State, as a step to the presidency, which he now ardently desired. But he was disappointed, John Quincy Adams being chosen by Monroe as Secretary of State. Monroe offered to Clay the mission to England and the Department of War, both of which he declined, preferring the speakership, to which he was almost unanimously re-elected. Here Clay brought his influence

to bear, in opposition to the views of the administration, to promote internal improvements to which some objected on constitutional grounds, but which he defended both as a statesman and a Western man. The result was a debate, ending in a resolution "that Congress has power under the Constitution to appropriate money for the construction of post roads, military and other roads, and of canals for the improvement of water-courses."

Meanwhile a subject of far greater interest called out the best energies of Mr. Clay, — the beginning of a memorable struggle, even the agitation of the Slavery question, which was not to end until all the slaves in the United States were emancipated by a single stroke of Abraham Lincoln's pen. So long as the products of slave labor were unprofitable, through the exhaustion of the tobacco-fields, there was a sort of sentimental philanthropy among disinterested Southern men tending to a partial emancipation; but when the cotton gin (invented in 1793) had trebled the value of slaves, and the breeding of them became a profitable industry, the philanthropy of the planters vanished. The English demand for American cotton grew rapidly, and in 1813 Francis C. Lowell established cotton manufactures in New England, so that cotton leaped into great importance. Thus the South had now become jealous of interference with its "favorite institution."

In an address in Manchester, England, October, 1863, — the first of that tremendous series of mob-controlling speeches with which Henry Ward Beecher put a check on the English government by convincing the English people of the righteousness of the Federal cause during our Civil War, — that "minister plenipotentiary," as Oliver Wendell Holmes called him, gave a witty summary of this change. After showing that the great Fathers of Revolutionary times, and notably the great Southerners, were antislavery men; that the first abolition society was formed in the Middle and Border States, and not in the Northeast; and that emancipation was enacted by the Eastern and Middle States as a natural consequence of the growth of that sentiment, the orator said: —

"What was it, then, when the country had advanced so far towards universal emancipation in the period of our national formation, that stopped this onward tide? First, the wonderful demand for cotton throughout the world, precisely when, from the invention of the cotton gin, it became easy to turn it to service. Slaves that before had been worth from three to four hundred dollars began to be worth six hundred dollars. That knocked away one third of adherence to the moral law. Then they became worth seven hundred dollars, and half the law went; then, eight or nine hundred dollars, and there was no such thing as moral law; then, one thousand or twelve hundred dollars,— and slavery became one of the Beatitudes."

Therefore, when in 1818 the territory of Missouri applied for admission to the Union as a State, the South was greatly excited by the proposition from Mr. Tallmadge, of New York, that its admission should be conditioned upon the prohibition of slavery within its limits. It was a revelation to the people of the North that so bitter a feeling should be aroused by opposition to the extension of an acknowledged evil, which had been abolished in all their own States. The Southern leaders, on their side, maintained that Congress could not, under the Constitution, legislate on such a subject, — that it was a matter for the States alone to decide; and that slavery was essential to the prosperity of the Southern States, as white men could not labor in the cotton and rice fields. The Northern orators maintained that not only had the right of Congress to exclude slavery from the Territories been generally admitted, but that it was a demoralizing institution and more injurious to the whites even than to the blacks. The Southern leaders became furiously agitated, and threatened to secede from the Union rather than submit to Northern dictation; while at the North the State legislatures demanded the exclusion of slaves from Missouri.

Carl Schurz, in his admirable life of Clay, makes a pertinent summary: "The slaveholders watched with apprehension the steady growth of the Free States

in population, wealth, and power. . . . As the slaveholders had no longer the ultimate extinction, but now the perpetuation, of slavery in view, the question of sectional power became one of first importance to them, and with it the necessity of having more slave States for the purpose of maintaining the political equilibrium, at least in the Senate. A struggle for more slave States was to them a struggle for life."

Thus the two elements of commercial profit and political power were involved in the struggle of the South for the maintenance and extension of slavery.

The House of Representatives in 1819 adopted the Missouri bill with the amendment restricting slavery, but the Senate did not concur; and in that same session Arkansas was admitted without slavery restriction. In the next Congress Missouri was again introduced, but the antislavery amendment was voted down. In 1820 Mr. Thomas, a senator from Illinois, proposed, as a mutual concession, that Missouri should be admitted without restriction, but that in all that part of the territory outside that State ceded by France to the United States, north of the latitude of 36° 30′ (the southern boundary of Missouri), slaves should thereafter be excluded; and this bill was finally passed March 2, 1820. Mr. Clay is credited with being the father of this compromise, but, according to Mr. Schurz, he did not deserve the honor. He adopted

it, however, and advocated it with so much eloquence and power that it owed its success largely to his efforts, and therefore it is still generally ascribed to him.

At that time no statesmen, North or South, had fully grasped the slavery question. Even Mr. Calhoun once seemed to have no doubt as to the authority of Congress to exclude slavery from the Territories, but he was decided enough in his opposition when he saw that it involved an irreconcilable conflict of interests, — that slavery and freedom are antagonistic ideas, concerning which there can be no genuine compromise. "There may be compromises," says Von Holst, "with regard to measures, but never between principles." And slavery, when the Missouri Compromise was started, was looked upon as a measure rather than as a principle, concerning which few statesmen had thought deeply. As the agitation increased, measures were lost sight of in principles.

The compromise by which Missouri was admitted as a slave State, while slavery should be excluded from all territory outside of it north of 36° 30′, was a temporary measure of expediency, and at that period was probably a wise one; since, if slavery had been excluded from Missouri, there might have been a dissolution of the Union. The preservation of the Union was the dearest object to the heart of Clay, who was

genuinely and thoroughly patriotic. Herein he doubtless rendered a great public service, and proved himself to be a broad-minded statesman. To effect this compromise Clay had put forth all his energies, not only in eloquent speeches and tireless labors in committees and a series of parliamentary devices for harmonizing the strife, but in innumerable interviews with individuals.

In 1820 Clay retired to private life in order to retrieve his fortunes by practice at the bar. Few men without either a professional or a private income can afford a long-continued public service. Although the members of Congress were paid, the pay was not large enough, — only eight dollars a day at that time. But Clay's interval of rest was soon cut short. In three years he was again elected to the House of Representatives, and in December, 1823, was promptly chosen Speaker by a large majority. He had now recovered his popularity, and was generally spoken of as "the great pacificator."

In Congress his voice was heard again in defence of internal improvements, — the making of roads and canals, — President Monroe having vetoed a bill favoring them on the ground that it was unconstitutional for Congress to vote money for them. Clay, however, succeeded in inducing Congress to make an appropriation for a survey of such roads as might be deemed

of national importance, which Mr. Monroe did not oppose. It was ever of vital necessity, in the eyes of Mr. Clay, to open up the West to settlers from the East, and he gloried in the prospect of the indefinite expanse of the country even to the Pacific ocean. "Sir," said he, in the debate on this question, "it is a subject of peculiar delight to me to look forward to the proud and happy period, distant as it may be, when circulation and association between the Atlantic and the Pacific and the Mexican Gulf shall be as free and perfect as they are at this moment in England, the most highly improved country on the globe. Sir, a new world has come into being since the Constitution was adopted. . . . Are we to neglect and refuse the redemption of that vast wilderness which once stretched unbroken beyond the Alleghany?" In these views he proved himself one of the most far-sighted statesmen that had as yet appeared in Congress, — a typical Western man of enthusiasm and boundless hope.

Not less enthusiastic was he in his open expressions of sympathy with the Greek struggle for liberty; as was the case also with Daniel Webster, — both advocating relief to the Greeks, not merely from sentiment, but to strike a blow at the "Holy Alliance" of European kingdoms, then bent on extinguishing liberty in every country in Europe. Clay's noble speech in defence of the Greeks was not, however, received with unan-

imous admiration, since many members of Congress were fearful of entangling the United States in European disputes and wars; and the movement came to naught.

Then followed the great debates which led to the famous tariff of 1824, in which Mr. Clay, although Speaker of the House, took a prominent part in Committee of the Whole, advocating an increase of duties for the protection of American manufactures of iron, hemp, glass, lead, wool, woollen and cotton goods, while duties on importations which did not interfere with American manufactures were to be left on a mere revenue basis. This tariff had become necessary, as he thought, in view of the prevailing distress produced by dependence on foreign markets. He would provide a home consumption for American manufactures, and thus develop home industries, which could be done only by imposing import taxes that should "protect" them against foreign competition. His speech on what he called the "American System" was one of the most elaborate he ever made, and Mr. Carl Schurz says of it that "his skill of statement, his ingenuity in the grouping of facts and principles, his plausibility of reasoning, his brilliant imagination, the fervor of his diction, the warm patriotic tone of his appeals" presented "the arguments which were current among high-tariff men then and which remain so still;"

while, on the other hand, "his superficial research, his habit of satisfying himself with half-knowledge, and his disinclination to reason out propositions logically in all their consequences" gave incompleteness to his otherwise brilliant effort. It made a great impression in spite of its weak points, and called out in opposition the extraordinary abilities of Daniel Webster, through whose massive sentences appeared his "superiority in keenness of analysis, in logical reasoning, in extent and accuracy of knowledge, in reach of thought and mastery of fundamental principles," over all the other speakers of the day. And this speech of Mr. Webster's stands unanswered, notwithstanding the opposite views he himself maintained four years afterwards, when he spoke again on the tariff, but representing manufacturing interests rather than those of shipping and commerce, advocating expediency rather than abstract principles the truth of which cannot be gainsaid. The bill as supported by Mr. Clay passed by a small majority, the members from the South generally voting against it.

After the tariff of 1824 the New England States went extensively into manufacturing, and the Middle States also. The protective idea had become popular in the North, and, under strong protests from the agricultural South, in 1828 a new tariff bill was enacted, largely on the principle of giving more pro-

tection to every interest that asked for it. This, called by its opponents "the tariff of abominations," was passed while Clay was Secretary of State; the discontent under it was to give rise to Southern Nullification, and to afford Clay another opportunity to act as "pacificator." All this tariff war is set forth in clear detail in Professor Sumner's "Life of Jackson."

This question of tariffs has, for seventy years now, been the great issue, next to slavery, between the North and South. More debates have taken place on this question than on any other in our Congressional history, and it still remains unsettled, like most other questions of political economy. The warfare has been constant and uninterrupted between those who argue subjects from abstract truths and those who look at local interests, and maintain that all political questions should be determined by circumstances. When it seemed to be the interest of Great Britain to advocate protection for her varied products, protection was the policy of the government; when it became evidently for her interest to defend free trade, then free trade became the law of Parliament.

On abstract grounds there is little dispute on the question: if all the world acted on the principles of free trade, protection would be indefensible. Practically, it is a matter of local interest: it is the interest of New England to secure protection for its

varied industries and to secure free raw materials for manufacture; it is the interest of agricultural States to buy wares in the cheapest market and to seek foreign markets for their surplus breadstuffs. The question, however, on broad grounds is whether protection is or is not for the interest of the whole country; and on that point there are differences of opinion among both politicians and statesmen. Formerly, few discussed the subject on abstract principles except college professors and doctrinaires; but it is a most momentous subject from a material point of view, and the great scale on which protection has been tried in America since the Civil War has produced a multiplicity of consequences — industrial and economic — which have set up wide-spread discussions of both principles and practical applications. How it will be finally settled, no one can predict; perhaps through a series of compromises, with ever lessening restriction, until the millennial dream of universal free trade shall become practicable. Protection has good points and bad ones. While it stimulates manufactures, it also creates monopolies and widens the distinctions between the rich and the poor. Disproportionate fortunes were one of the principal causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, and are a grave danger to our modern civilization.

But then it is difficult to point out any period

in the history of civilization when disproportionate fortunes did not exist, except in primitive agricultural States in the enjoyment of personal liberty, like Switzerland and New England one hundred years ago. They certainly existed in feudal Europe as they do in England to-day. The great cotton lords are feudal barons under another name. Where money is worshipped there will be money-aristocrats, who in vulgar pride and power rival the worst specimens of an hereditary nobility. There is really little that is new in human organizations, — little that Solomon and Aristotle had not learned. When we go to the foundation of society it is the same story, in all ages and countries. Most that is new is superficial and transitory. The permanent is eternally based on the certitudes of life, which are moral and intellectual rather than mechanical and material. Whatever promotes these certitudes is the highest political wisdom.

We now turn to contemplate the beginnings of Mr. Clay's aspirations to the presidency, which from this time never left him until he had one foot in the grave. As a successful, popular, and ambitious man who had already rendered important services, we cannot wonder that he sought the envied prize. Who in the nation was more eminent than he? But such a consummation of ambition is not attained by merit alone. He had enemies, and he had powerful rivals.

In 1824 John Quincy Adams, as Monroe's Secretary of State, was in the line of promotion, — a statesman of experience and abilities, the superior of Clay in learning, who had spent his life in the public service, and in honorable positions, especially as a foreign minister. He belonged to the reigning party and was the choice of New England. Moreover he had the prestige of a great name. He was, it is true, far from popular, was cold and severe in manners, and irritable in temperament; but he was public-spirited, patriotic, incorruptible, lofty in sentiment, and unstained by vices.

Andrew Jackson was also a formidable competitor, — a military hero, the idol of the West, and a man of extraordinary force of character, with undoubted executive abilities, but without much experience in civil affairs, self-willed, despotic in temper, and unscrupulous. Crawford, of Georgia, Secretary of the Treasury, with great Southern prestige, and an adroit politician, was also a candidate. Superior to all these candidates in political genius was Calhoun of South Carolina, not yet so prominent as he afterwards became.

The popular choice in 1824 lay between Jackson and Adams, and as no candidate obtained a majority of the electoral votes, the election reverted to the House of Representatives, and Adams was chosen, much to the chagrin of Jackson, who had the largest number of popular votes, and the disappointment of

Clay, who did not attempt to conceal it. When the latter saw that his own chances were small, however, he had thrown his influence in favor of Adams, securing his election, and became his Secretary of State. Jackson was indignant, as he felt he had been robbed of the prize by a secret bargain, or coalition, between Clay and Adams. In retiring from the speakership of the House, which he had held so long, Clay received the formal and hearty thanks of that body for his undeniably distinguished services as presiding officer. In knowledge of parliamentary law and tactics, in prompt decisions, — never once overruled in all his long career, — in fairness, courtesy, self-command, and control of the House at the stormiest times, he certainly never had a superior. Friends and enemies alike recognized and cordially expressed their sense of his masterly abilities.

The administration of Adams was not eventful, but to his credit he made only four removals from office during his term of service, and these for good cause; he followed out the policy of his predecessors, even under pressure from his cabinet refusing to recognize either friends or enemies as such, but simply holding public officers to their duty. So, too, in his foreign policy, which was conservative and prudent, and free from entangling alliances, at a time when the struggle for independence among the South American repub-

lics presented an occasion for interference, and when the debates on the Panama mission — a proposed council of South and Central American republics at Panama, to which the United States were invited to send representatives — were embarrassing to the Executive.

The services of Mr. Clay as Secretary of State were not distinguished. He made a number of satisfactory treaties with foreign powers, and exhibited great catholicity of mind; but he was embroiled in quarrels and disputes anything but glorious, and he further found his situation irksome. His field was the legislature; as an executive officer he was out of place. It may be doubted whether he would have made as good a President as many inferior politicians. He detested office labor, and was sensitive to hostile criticism. His acceptance of the office of Secretary of State was probably a blunder, as his appointment was (though unjustly) thought by many to be in fulfilment of a bargain, and it did not advance his popularity. He was subject to slanders and misrepresentations. The secretaryship, instead of being a step to the presidency, was thus rather an impediment in his way. It was not even a position of as much power as the speakership. It gave him no excitement, and did not keep him before the eyes of the people. His health failed. He even thought of resignation.

The supporters of the Adams administration, those who more and more came to rank themselves as promoters of tariffs and internal improvements, with liberal views as to the constitutional powers of the national government, gradually consolidated in opposition to the party headed by Jackson. The former called themselves National Republicans, and the latter, Democratic Republicans. During the Jacksonian administrations they became known more simply as Whigs and Democrats.

On the accession of General Jackson to the presidency in 1829, Mr. Clay retired to his farm at Ashland; but while he amused himself by raising fine cattle and horses, and straightening out his embarrassed finances, he was still the recognized leader of the National Republican party. He was then fifty-two years of age, at his very best and strongest period. He took more interest in politics than in agriculture or in literary matters. He was not a learned man, nor a great reader, but a close observer of men and of all political movements. He was a great favorite, and received perpetual ovations whenever he travelled, always ready to make speeches at public meetings, which were undoubtedly eloquent and instructive, but not masterpieces like those of Webster at Plymouth and Bunker Hill. They were not rich in fundamental principles of government and political science, and

far from being elaborate, but were earnest, patriotic, and impassioned. Clay was fearless, ingenuous, and chivalric, and won the hearts of the people, which Webster failed to do. Both were great debaters, the one appealing to the understanding, and the other to popular sentiments. Webster was cold, massive, logical, although occasionally illuminating his argument with a grand glow of eloquence, — the admiration of lawyers and clergymen. Clay was the delight of the common people, — impulsive, electrical, brilliant, calling out the sympathies of his hearers, and captivating them by his obvious sincerity and frankness, — not so much convincing them as moving them and stimulating them to action. Webster rarely lost his temper, but he could be terribly sarcastic, harsh, and even fierce. Clay was passionate and irritable, but forgiving and generous, loath to lose a friend and eager for popularity; Webster seemed indifferent to applause, and even to ordinary friendship, proud, and self-sustained. Clay was vain and susceptible to flattery. No stranger could approach Webster, but Clay was as accessible as a primitive bishop. New England was proud of Webster, but the West loved Clay. Kentucky would follow her favorite to the last, whatever mistakes he might make, but Massachusetts deserted Webster when he failed to respond to her popular convictions. Both men were disappointed in the prize

they sought: one because he was not loved by the people, colossal as they admitted him to be, — a frowning Jupiter Tonans absorbed in his own majesty; the other because he had incurred the hatred of Jackson and other party chiefs who were envious of his popularity, and fearful of his ascendency.

The hatred which Clay and Jackson had for each other was inexorable. It steeped them both in bitterness and uncompromising opposition. They were rivals, — the heads of their respective parties. Clay regarded Jackson as an ignorant, despotic, unscrupulous military chieftain, who had been raised to power by the blind adoration of military success; while Jackson looked upon Clay as an intriguing politician, without honesty, industry, or consistency, gifted only in speech-making. Their quarrels and mutual abuse formed no small part of the political history of the country during Jackson's administration, and have received from historians more attention than they deserved. Mr. Colton takes up about one half of his first volume of the "Life of Clay" in dismal documents which few care about, relating to what he calls the "Great Conspiracy," that is, the intrigues of politicians to rob Clay of his rights, — the miserable party warfare which raged so furiously and blindly from 1825 to 1836. I need not here dwell on the contentions and slanders and hatreds which were so prominent at the time the

two great national parties were formed, and which divided the country until the Civil War.

The most notable portion of Henry Clay's life was his great career as Senator in Congress, which he entered in December, 1831, two years after the inauguration of President Jackson. The first subject of national importance to which he gave his attention was the one with which his name and fame are mostly identified, — the tariff, to a moderate form of which the President in 1829 had announced himself to be favorable, but which he afterwards more and more opposed, on the ground that the revenues already produced were in excess of the needs of the government. The subject was ably discussed, — first, in a resolution introduced by Senator Clay declarative of principles involving some reduction of duties on articles that did not compete with American industries, but maintaining generally the "American System" successfully introduced by him in the tariff of 1824; and then, in a bill framed in accordance with the resolution, — both of which were passed in 1832.

Clay's speeches on this tariff of 1832 were among the strongest and ablest he ever delivered. Indeed, he apparently exhausted his subject. Little has been added by political economists to the arguments for protection since his day. His main points were: that it was beneficial to all parts of the Union, and also-

lutely necessary to much the largest portion; that the price of cotton and of other agricultural products had been sustained and a decline averted, by the protective system; that even if the foreign demand for cotton had been diminished by the operation of this system (the plea of the Southern leaders), the diminution had been more than compensated in the additional demand created at home; that the competition produced by the system reduces the price of manufactured articles, — for which he adduced his facts; and finally that the policy of free trade, without benefiting any section of the Union, would, by subjecting us to foreign legislation, regulated by foreign interests, lead to the prostration and ruin of our manufactories.

It must be remembered that this speech was made in 1832, before our manufactures — really "infant industries" — could compete successfully with foreigners in anything. At the present time there are many interests which need no protection at all, and the protection of these interests, as a matter of course, fosters monopolies. And hence, the progress which is continually being made in manufactures, enabling this country to be independent of foreign industries, makes protective duties on many articles undesirable now which were expedient and even necessary sixty years ago, — an illustration of the fallacy of tariffs founded on immutable principles, when they are

simply matters of expediency according to the changing interests of nations.

We have already, in the lecture on Jackson, described the Nullification episode, with the threatening protests against the tariff of 1828 and its amendments of 1832; Jackson's prompt action; and Clay's patriotic and earnest efforts resulting in the Compromise Tariff of March, 1833. By this bill duties were to be gradually reduced from 25 per cent *ad valorem* to 20 per cent. Mr. Webster was not altogether satisfied, nor were the extreme tariff men, who would have run the risks of the threatened nullification by South Carolina. It proved, however, a popular measure, and did much to tranquillize the nation; yet it did not wholly satisfy the South, nor any extreme partisans, as compromises seldom do, and Clay lost many friends in consequence, a result which he anticipated and manfully met. It led to one of his finest bursts of eloquence.

"I have," said he, "been accused of ambition in presenting this measure. Ambition! inordinate ambition! Low, grovelling souls who are utterly incapable of elevating themselves to the higher and nobler duties of pure patriotism — beings who, forever keeping their own selfish aims in view, decide all public measures by their presumed influence on their own aggrandizement — judge me by the venal rule which they prescribe for themselves. I am no candidate for any office in the gift of these States, united or separated. I never wish, never expect to be. Pass this bill, tranquillize the country, restore confidence and affection

for the Union, and I am willing to go to Ashland and renounce public service forever. Yes, I have ambition, but it is the ambition of being the humble instrument in the hands of Providence to reconcile a divided people, once more to revive concord and harmony in a distracted land, — the pleasing ambition of contemplating the glorious spectacle of a free, united, prosperous, and fraternal people."

The policy which Mr. Clay advocated with so much ability during the whole of his congressional life was that manufactures, as well as the culture of rice, tobacco, and cotton, would enrich this country, and therefore ought to be fostered and protected by Congress, whatever Mr. Hayne or Mr. Calhoun should say to the contrary, or even General Jackson himself, whose sympathies were with the South, and consequently with slavery. Therefore Clay is called the father of the American System, — he was the advocate, not of any local interests, but the interests of the country as a whole, thus establishing his claim to be a statesman rather than a politician who never looks beyond local and transient interests, and is especially subservient to party dictation. The Southern politicians may not have wished to root out manufacturing altogether, but it was their policy to keep the agricultural interests in the ascendent.

Soon after the close of the session of the Twenty-Second Congress, Mr. Clay, on his return to Ashland, put into execution a project he had long contemplated

of visiting the Eastern cities. At that period even an excursion of one thousand miles was a serious affair, and attended with great discomfort. Wherever Mr. Clay went he was received with enthusiasm. Receptions, public dinners, and fêtes succeeded each other in all the principal cities. In Baltimore, in Wilmington, and in Philadelphia he was entertained at balls and banquets. In New York he was the guest of the city and was visited by thousands eager to shake his hand. The company controlling the line between New York and Boston tendered to him the use of one of their fine steamers to Rhode Island, where every social honor was publicly given him. In Boston he was welcomed by a committee of forty, in behalf of the young men, headed by Mr. Winthrop, and was received by a committee of old men, when he was eloquently addressed by Mr. William Sullivan, and was subsequently waited upon by the mayor and aldermen of the city. Deputations from Portland and Portsmouth besought the honor of a visit. At Charlestown, on Bunker Hill Edward Everett welcomed him in behalf of the city, and pronounced one of his felicitous speeches. At Faneuil Hall a delegation of young men presented him with a pair of silver pitchers. He was even dragged to lyceum lectures during the two weeks he remained in Boston. He thence proceeded amid public demonstrations to Worcester, Springfield, Hartford,

Northampton, Pittsfield, Troy, Albany, and back again to New York. The carriage-makers of Newark begged his acceptance of one of their most costly carriages for the use of his wife. No one except Washington, Lafayette, and General Grant ever received more enthusiastic ovations in New England, — all in recognition of his services as a statesman, without his having reached any higher position than that of Senator or Secretary of State.

In such a rapid review of the career of Mr. Clay as we are obliged to make, it is impossible to enter upon the details of political movements and the shifting grounds of party organizations and warfare. We must not, however, lose sight of that most characteristic element of Clay's public life, — his perennial candidature for the presidency. We have already seen him in 1824, when his failure was evident, throwing his influence into the scale for John Quincy Adams. In 1828, as Adams' Secretary of State, he could not be a rival to his chief, and so escaped the whelming overthrow with which Jackson defeated their party. In 1832 he was an intensely popular candidate of the National Republicans, especially the merchants and manufacturers of the North and East and the friends of the United States Bank; but Southern hostility to his tariff principles and the rally of "the people" in support of Jackson's war on moneyed institutions

threw him out again in notable defeat. In 1836 and again in 1840 Clay was prominent before the Conventions of the Whig or National Republican party, but other interests subordinated his claims to nomination, and the election of Van Buren by the Democrats in 1836, and of Harrison by the Whigs in 1840, kept him still in abeyance. In 1844 Clay was again the Whig candidate, the chief issue being the admission of Texas, but he was defeated by Polk and the Democrats; and after that the paramount slavery question pushed him aside, and he dropped out of the race.

The bitter war which Clay made on the administration of General Jackson, especially in reference to the United States Bank question, has already been noticed, and although it is an important passage in his history, I must pass it by to avoid repetition, which is always tedious. All I would say in this connection is that Clay was foremost among the supporters of the Bank, and opposed not only the removal of deposits but also the sub-treasury scheme of Mr. Van Buren that followed the failure to maintain the Bank. Some of his ablest oratory was expended in the unsuccessful opposition to these Democratic measures.

In 1837 came the bursting of the money-bubble, which had turned everybody's head and led to the

most extravagant speculations, high prices, high rents, and lofty expectations in all parts of the country. This was followed of course by the commercial crisis, the general distress, and all the evils which Clay and Webster had predicted, but to which the government of Van Buren seemed to be indifferent while enforcing its pet schemes, against all the settled laws of trade and the experiences of the past. But the country was elastic after all, and a great reaction set in. New political combinations were made to express the general indignation against the responsible party in power, and the Whig party arose, joined by many leading Democrats like Rives of Virginia and Tallmadge of New York, while Calhoun went over to Van Buren, and dissolved his alliance with Clay, which in reality for several years had been hollow. In the presidential election of 1840 Mr. Van Buren was defeated by an overwhelming majority, and the Whigs came into power under the presidency of General Harrison, chosen not for talents or services, but for his availability.

The best that can be said of Harrison is that he was an honest man. He was a small farmer in Ohio with no definite political principles, but had gained some military éclat in the War of 1812. The presidential campaign of 1840 is well described by Carl Schurz as "a popular frolic," with its "monster mass-

meetings," with log-cabins, raccoons, hard cider, with "huge picnics," and ridiculous "doggerel about 'Tippecanoe and Tyler too.'" The reason why it called out so great enthusiasm was frivolous enough in itself, but it expressed the popular reaction against the misrule of Jackson and Van Buren, which had plunged the country into financial distress, notwithstanding the general prosperity which existed when Jackson was raised to power, — a lesson to all future presidents who set up their own will against the collected experience and wisdom of the leading intellects of the country.

President Harrison offered to the great chieftain of the Whig party the first place in his cabinet, which he declined, preferring his senatorial dignity and power. Besides, he had been Secretary of State under John Quincy Adams and found the office irksome. He knew full well that his true arena was the Senate Chamber, — which also was most favorable to his presidential aspirations. But Webster was induced to take the office declined by Clay, having for his associates in the cabinet such able men as Ewing, Badger, Bell, Crittenden, and Granger.

Mr. Clay had lost no time, when Congress assembled in December, 1840, in offering a resolution for the repeal of the sub-treasury act; but as the Democrats had still a majority in the Senate the resolution failed.

When the next Congress assembled, General Harrison having lived only one month after his inauguration and the Vice-president, John Tyler, having succeeded him, the sub-treasury act was repealed; but the President refused to give his signature to the bill for the re-charter of the United States Bank, to the dismay of the Whigs, and the deep disappointment of Clay, who at once severed his alliance with Tyler, and became his bitter opponent, carrying with him the cabinet, which resigned, with the exception of Webster, who was engaged in important negotiations in reference to the northeastern boundary. The new cabinet was made up of Tyler's personal friends, who had been Jackson Democrats, and the fruits of the great Whig victory were therefore in a measure lost. The Democratic party gradually regained its ascendency, which it retained with a brief interval till the election of Abraham Lincoln.

A question greater than banks and tariffs, if moral questions are greater than material ones, now began again to be discussed in Congress, ending only in civil war. This was the slavery question. I have already spoken of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which Mr. Clay has the chief credit of effecting, but the time now came for him to meet the question on other grounds. The abolitionists, through the constant growth of the antislavery sentiment throughout the

North, had become a power, and demanded that slavery should be abolished in the District of Columbia.

And here again I feel it best to defer what I have to say on antislavery agitation to the next lecture, especially as Clay was mixed up in it only by his attempt to pour oil on the troubled waters. He himself was a a Southerner, and was not supposed to take a leading part in the conflict, although opposed to slavery on philanthropic grounds. Without being an abolitionist, he dreaded the extension of the slave-power; yet as he wished to be President he was afraid of losing votes, and did not wish to alienate either the North or the South. But for his inordinate desire for the presidential office he might have been a leader in the antislavery movement. All his sympathies were with freedom. He took the deepest interest in colonization, and was president of the Colonization Society, which had for its aim the sending of manumitted negroes to Liberia.

The question of the annexation of Texas, forced to the front in the interest of the slaveholding States, united the Democrats and elected James K. Polk President in 1844; while Clay and the Whig Party, who confidently expected success, lost the election by reason of the growth of the Antislavery or Liberty party which cast a large vote in New York, — the pivotal State, without whose support in the Electoral College the carrying of the other Northern States

went for nought. The Mexican War followed; and in 1846 David Wilmot of Pennsylvania moved an amendment to a bill appropriating $2,000,000 for final negotiations, providing that in all territories acquired from Mexico slavery should be prohibited. The Wilmot Proviso was lost, but arose during the next four years, again and again, in different forms, but always as the standard of the antislavery Northerners.

When the antislavery agitation had reached an alarming extent, and threatened to drive the South into secession from the Union, Clay appeared once again in his great rôle as a pacificator. To preserve the Union was the dearest object of his public life. He would by a timely concession avert the catastrophe which the Southern leaders threatened, and he probably warded off the inevitable combat when, in 1850, he made his great speech, in favor of sacrificing the Wilmot Proviso, and enacting a more stringent fugitive-slave law.

In 1848, embittered by having been set aside as the nominee of the Whig party for the presidency in favor of General Taylor, one of the successful military chieftains in the Mexican War, — who as a Southern man, with no political principles or enemies, was thought to be more "available," — Clay had retired from the Senate, and for a year had remained at Ashland, nominally and avowedly "out of politics,"

but intensely interested, and writing letters about the new slavery complications. In December, 1849, he was returned to the Senate, and inevitably became again one of the foremost in all the debates.

When the conflict had grown hot and fierce, in January, 1850, Clay introduced a bill for harmonizing all interests. As to the disputed question of slavery in the new territory, he would pacify the North by admitting California as a free State, and abolishing slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia; while the South was to be placated by leaving Utah and New Mexico unrestricted as to slavery, and by a more efficient law for the pursuit and capture of fugitive slaves. His speech occupied two days, delivered in great physical exhaustion, and was "an appeal to the North for concession and to the South for peace." Like Webster, who followed with his renowned "Seventh-of-March speech" and who alienated Massachusetts because he did not go far enough for freedom, Clay showed that there could be no peaceable secession, that secession meant war, and that it would be war to propagate a wrong, in which the sympathy of all mankind would be against us.

Calhoun followed, defending the interests of slavery, which he called "the rights of the South," though too weak to deliver his speech, which was read for him. He clearly saw the issue, — that slavery was doomed if

the Union were preserved,— and therefore welcomed war before the North should be prepared for it. It was the South Carolinian's last great effort in the Senate, for the hand of death was upon him. He realized that if the South did not resist and put down agitation on the slavery question, the cause would be lost. It was already virtually lost, since the conflict between freedom and slavery was manifestly irrepressible, and would come in spite of concessions, which only put off the evil day.

On the 11th of March Seward, of New York, now becoming prominent in the Senate, spoke, deprecating all compromise on a matter of principle, and declaring that there was a "higher law than the Constitution itself." He therefore would at least prevent the extension of slavery by any means in the power of Congress, on the ground of moral right, not of political expediency, undismayed by all the threats of secession. Two weeks afterward Chase of Ohio took the same ground as Seward. From that time Seward and Chase supplanted Webster and Clay in the confidence of the North, on all antislavery questions.

After seven months of acrimonious debate in both houses of Congress and during a session of extraordinary length, the compromise measures of Clay were substantially passed, — a truce rather than a peace, which put off the dreadful issue for eleven years

longer. It was the best thing to do, for the South was in deadly earnest, exceedingly exasperated, and blinded. A war in 1851 would have had uncertain issues, with such a man as Fillmore in the presidential chair, to which he had succeeded on the death of Taylor. He was a most respectable man and of fair abilities, but not of sufficient force and character to guide the nation. It was better to submit for a while to the Fugitive Slave Law than drive the South out of the Union, with the logical consequences of the separation. But the abolitionists had no idea of submitting to a law which was inhuman, even to pacify the South, and the law was resisted in Boston, which again kindled the smothered flames, to the great disappointment and alarm of Clay, for he thought that his compromise bill had settled the existing difficulties.

In the meantime the health of the great pacificator began to decline. He was forced by a threatening and distressing cough to seek the air of Cuba, which did him no good. He was obliged to decline an invitation of the citizens of New York to address them on the affairs of the nation, but wrote a long letter instead, addressed more to the South than to the North, for he more than any other man, saw the impending dangers. Although there was a large majority at the South in favor of Union, yet the minority had become furious, and comprised the ablest leaders, concerning

whose intention such men as Seward and Chase and Hale of Maine were sceptical. In the ferment of excited passions it is not safe to calculate on men's acting according to reason. It is wiser to predict that they will act against reason. Here Clay was wiser in his anxiety than the Northern statesmen generally, who thought there would be peace because it was reasonable.

Clay did not live to see all compromises thrown to the winds. He died June 29, 1852, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, at the National Hotel in Washington. Imposing funeral ceremonies took place amid general lamentation, and the whole country responded with glowing eulogies.

I have omitted allusion to other speeches which the great statesman made in his long public career, and have presented only the salient points of his life, in which his parliamentary eloquence blazed with the greatest heat; for he was the greatest orator, in general estimation, that this country has produced, although inferior to Webster in massive power, in purity of style, in weight of argument, and breadth of knowledge. To my mind his speeches are diffuse and exaggerated, and wanting in simplicity. But what reads the best is not always the most effective in debate. Certainly no American orator approached him in electrical power. No one had more devoted friends. No

one was more generally beloved. No one had greater experience, or rendered more valuable public services.

And yet he failed to reach the presidency, to which for thirty years he had aspired, and which at times seemed within his grasp. He had made powerful enemies, especially in Jackson and his partisans, and politicians dreaded his ascendency, and feared that as President he would be dictatorial, though not perhaps arbitrary like Jackson. He would have been a happier man if he had not so eagerly coveted a prize which it seems is unattainable by mere force of intellect, and is often conferred apparently by accidental circumstances. It is too high an office to be sought, either by genius or services, except in the military line; but even General Scott, the real hero of the Mexican war, failed in his ambitious aspirations, as well as Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Benton, Seward, Chase, and Douglas, while less prominent men were selected, and probably ever will be. This may be looked at as a rebuke to political ambition, which ought to be satisfied with the fame conferred by genius rather than that of place, which never yet made a man really great. The presidency would have added nothing to the glory which Clay won in the Congress of the United States. It certainly added nothing to the fame of Grant, which was won on the battle-field, and it detracted from that of Jackson. And yet Clay felt keenly the disappoint-

ment, that with all his talents and services, weaker men were preferred to him.

Aside from the weakness of Clay in attempting to grasp a phantom, his character stands out in an interesting light on the whole. He had his faults and failings which did not interfere with his ambition, and great and noble traits which more than balanced them, the most marked of which was the patriotism whose fire never went out. If any man ever loved his country, and devoted all the energies of his mind and soul to promote its welfare and secure its lasting union, that man was the illustrious Senator from Kentucky, whose eloquent pleadings were household words for nearly half a century throughout the length and breadth of the land. With him there was no East, no West, no North, and no South, to be especially favored or served, but the whole country, one and indivisible for ages to come. And no other man in high position had a more glowing conviction of its ever-increasing power and glory than he.

"Whether," says his best biographer, "he thundered against British tyranny on the seas, or urged the recognition of the South American sister republics, or attacked the high-handed conduct of the military chieftain in the Florida war, or advocated protection and internal improvements, or assailed the one-man power and spoils politics in the person of Andrew

Jackson, or entreated for compromise and conciliation regarding the tariff or slavery, — there was always ringing through his words a fervid plea for his country, a zealous appeal in behalf of the honor and the future greatness and glory of the republic, or an anxious warning lest the Union be put in jeopardy."

One thing is certain, that no man in the country exercised so great an influence, for a generation, in shaping the policy of national legislation as Henry Clay, a policy which, on the whole, has proved enlightened, benignant, and useful. And hence his name and memory will not only be honorably mentioned by historians, but will be fondly cherished so long as American institutions shall endure. He is one of the greater lights in the galaxy of American stars, as he was the advocate of principles which have proved conducive to national prosperity in the first century of the nation's history. It is a great thing to give shape to the beneficent institutions of a country, and especially to be a source of patriotic inspiration to its people. It is greater glory than to be enrolled in the list of presidents, especially if they are mentioned only as the fortunate occupants of a great office to which they were blindly elected. Of the long succession of the occupants of the Papal Chair, the most august of worldly dignities, not one in twenty has left a mark, or is of any historical importance, while

hundreds of churchmen and theologians in comparatively humble positions have left an immortal fame. The glory of Clay is not dimmed because he failed in reaching a worthy object of ambition. It is enough to be embalmed in the hearts of the people as a national benefactor, and to shine as a star of the first magnitude in the political firmament.

AUTHORITIES.

Carl Schurz's Life of Henry Clay is far the ablest and most interesting that I have read. The Life of Clay by Colton is fuller and more pretentious, but is diffuse. Benton's Thirty Years in Congress should be consulted; also the various Lives of Webster and Calhoun. See also Wilson's Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America. The writings of the political economists, like Sumner, Walker, Cary, and others, should be consulted in reference to tariffs. The Life of Andrew Jackson sheds light on Clay's hostility to the hero of New Orleans.

LXXX.

JOHN C. CALHOUN.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

1782–1850.

LXXX.

JOHN C. CALHOUN.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

THE extraordinary abilities of John C. Calhoun, the great influence he exerted as the representative of Southern interests in the National Legislature, and especially his connection with the Slavery Question, make it necessary to include him among the statesmen who, for evil or good, have powerfully affected the destinies of the United States. He is a great historical character, — the peer of Webster and Clay in congressional history, and more unsullied than either of them in the virtues of private life. In South Carolina he was regarded as little less than a demigod, and until the antislavery agitation began he was viewed as among the foremost statesmen of the land. His elevation to commanding influence in Congress was very rapid, and but for his identification with partisan interests and a bad institution, there was no office in the gift of the nation to which he could not reasonably have aspired.

John Caldwell Calhoun was born in 1782, of highly respectable Protestant-Irish descent, in the Abbeville District in South Carolina. He was not a patrician according to the ideas of rich planters. He had but a slender school education in boyhood, but was prepared for college by a Presbyterian clergyman, entered the Junior Class of Yale College in 1802, and was graduated with high honors. He chose the law for his profession, studied laboriously for three years, spending eighteen months at the then famous law school at Litchfield, Connecticut, and gave great promise, in his remarkable logical powers, of becoming an eminent lawyer.

Whatever abilities Mr. Calhoun may have had for the law, it does not appear that he practised it long, or to any great extent. His taste and his genius inclined him to politics. And, having married a lady with some fortune, he had sufficient means to live without professional drudgery. After serving a short time in the State Legislature of South Carolina, he was elected a member of Congress, and took his seat in the House of Representatives in 1811, at the age of twenty-nine. From the very first his voice was heard. He made a speech in favor of raising ten thousand additional men to our army to resist the encroachments of Great Britain and prepare for hostilities should the country drift into war. It was an able speech for a

young man, and its scornful repudiation of reckoning the costs of war against insult and violated rights had a chivalric ring about it: "Sir, I here enter my solemn protest against a low and calculating avarice entering this hall of legislation. It is only fit for shops and counting-houses. . . . It is a compromising spirit, always ready to yield a part to save the residue." Here at an early date we hear the key-note of his life, — hatred of compromises and half-measures. If it were necessary to go to war at all, he would fight regardless of expense

Thus Calhoun began his public career as an advocate of war with Great Britain. The old Revolutionary sores had not yet had time to heal, and there was general hostility to England, except among the Virginia aristocrats and the Federalists of the North. Although a young man, Calhoun was placed upon the important committee of Foreign Affairs, of which he was soon made chairman.

Calhoun's early speeches in Congress gave promise of rare abilities. The most able of them were those on the repeal of the Embargo, in 1814; on the commercial convention with Great Britain in 1816; on the United States Bank Bill and the tariff the same year; and on the Internal Improvement Bill in 1817. The main subject which occupied Congress from 1812 to 1814 was the war with Great Britain, during the

administration of Madison; and afterwards, till 1817, the great questions at issue were in reference to tariffs and internal improvements.

In the discussion of these subjects Calhoun took broad and patriotic ground. At that time we see no sectional interests predominating in his mind. He favored internal improvements, great permanent roads, and even the protection of manufactures, and a National Bank. On all these questions his sectional interests at a later day led him to support the exact opposite of these early national views. Says Von Holst: "His speech on the new tariff bill (April 6, 1816) was a long and carefully prepared argument in favor of the whole economical platform on which the Whig party stood to the last day of its existence. . . . Even Henry Clay and Horace Greeley have not been able to put their favorite doctrine into stronger language. . . . His final aim was the industrial independence of the United States from Europe; and this, he thought, could be obtained by protective duties."

Calhoun's speeches, during the six years that he was a member of the House of Representatives, were so able as to attract the attention of the nation, and in 1817 Monroe selected him as his Secretary of War. And he made a good executive officer in this branch of the public service, putting things to rights, and bringing order out of confusion, living on terms of friend-

ship with John Quincy Adams and other members of the cabinet, planning military roads, introducing a system of strict economy in his department, and making salutary reforms. He tolerated no abuses. He was disposed to do justice to the Indians, and raise them from their degradation, even seeking to educate them, when it was more than probable that they would return to their barbaric habits, — a race, as it would seem from experience, very difficult to civilize. Adams thus spoke of his young colleague: "Mr. Calhoun is a man of fair and candid mind, of honorable principles, of quick and clear understanding, of cool self-possession, of enlarged philosophical views, and of ardent patriotism. He is above all sectional and factious prejudices more than any other statesman of this Union with whom I have ever acted," — a very different verdict from what he wrote in his diary in 1831. Judge Story wrote of him in 1823 in these terms: "I have great admiration for Mr. Calhoun, and think few men have more enlarged and liberal views of the true policy of the national government."

The post he held, however, was not Calhoun's true arena, but one which an ambitious young man of thirty-five could not well decline, from the honor it brought. The secretaryship of war is the least important of all the cabinet offices in time of peace, and was especially so when the army was reduced to six thousand men.

Its functions amounted to little more than sending small detachments to military posts, making contracts for the commissariat, visiting occasionally the forts and fortifications, and making a figure in Washington society. It furnished no field for extensive operations, or the exercise of remarkable qualities of mind. But inasmuch as it made Calhoun a member of the cabinet, it gave him an opportunity to express his mind on all national issues, and exercise an influence on the President himself. It did not make him prominent in the eyes of the nation. He was simply the head of a bureau, although an important personage in the eyes of the cadets of West Point and of some lazy lieutenants stationed among the Indians. But whatever the part he was required to play, he did his duty, showed ability, and won confidence. He doubtless added to his reputation, else he would not have been talked about as a candidate for the presidency, selected as a candidate for the vice-presidency, and chosen to that position by Northern votes, as he was in 1824, when the election was thrown into the House of Representatives, and the friends of Henry Clay made Adams, instead of Jackson, President. Calhoun's popularity with all parties resulted in his election as vice-president by a very large popular vote. He deserved it. The day had not come for the ascendency of mere politicians, and their division of the spoils of office.

The condition of the slaveholding States at this period was most prosperous. The culture of cotton had become exceedingly lucrative. Rich planters spent their summers at the North in luxurious independence. It was the era of general "good feeling." No agitating questions had arisen. Young men at the South sought education in the New England colleges; manufacturing interests were in their infancy, and had not, as yet, excited Southern jealousy. Commercial prosperity in New England was the main object desired, although the war with Great Britain had proved disastrous to it. Political influence seemed to centre in the Southern States. These States had furnished four presidents out of five. The great West had not arisen in its might; it had no great cities: but Charleston and Boston were centres of culture and wealth, and on good terms with each other, both equally free from agitating questions, and both equally benignant to the institution of slavery, which the Constitution was supposed to have made secure forever. The Adams administration was notable for nothing but beginnings of the tariff question and the protectionist Act of 1828, the growth of the Democratic party, the final intensity of the presidential campaign of 1828, and the election of Jackson, with Calhoun as Vice-President.

As the incumbent of this office for two terms,

Mr. Calhoun did not make a great mark in history. His office was one of dignity and not of power; but during his vice-presidency important discussions took place in Congress which placed him, as presiding officer of the Senate, in an embarrassing position. He was between two fires, and gradually became alienated from the two opposing parties to whom he owed his election. He could go neither with Adams nor with Jackson on public measures, and both interfered with his aspirations for the presidency. His personal relations with Jackson, who had been his warm friend and supporter, became strained after his second election as Vice-President. He took part against Jackson in the President's undignified attempt to force his cabinet to recognize the social position of Mrs. Eaton. Further, it was divulged by Crawford, who had been Secretary of the Treasury in Monroe's cabinet when Calhoun was Secretary of War, that the latter had in 1818 favored a censure of Jackson for his unauthorized seizure of Spanish territory in the Florida campaign during the Seminole War; and this increased the growing animosity. What had been an alienation between the two highest officers of the government ripened into intense hatred, which was fatal to the aspirations of Calhoun for the presidency; for no man could be President against the overpowering influence of Jackson. This was a bitter disap-

pointment to Calhoun, for he had set his heart on being the successor of Jackson in the presidential chair.

There were two subjects which had arisen to great importance during Mr. Calhoun's terms of executive office which not only blasted his prospects for the presidency, but separated him forever from his former friends and allies.

One of these was the tariff question, which gave him great uneasiness. He opened his eyes to see that protection and internal improvements, so ably advocated by Henry Clay, and even by himself in 1816, were becoming the policy of the government to the enriching of the North. True, it was only an economical question, but it seemed to him to lay the axe to the root of Southern prosperity. It was his settled conviction that tariffs for protection would increase the burdens of the South by raising the price of all those articles which it was compelled to buy, and that large profits on articles manufactured in the United States would only enrich the Northern manufacturers. The South, being an agricultural country exclusively, naturally sought to buy in the cheapest market, and therefore wanted no tariff except for revenue. When Mr. Calhoun saw that protectionist duties were an injury to the slaveholding States he reversed entirely his former opinions. And what in-

fluence he could exert as the presiding officer of the Senate was now displayed against the Adams party, which had favored his election to the vice-presidency, and of course alienated his Northern supporters, especially Adams, who now turned against him, and as bitterly denounced as once he had favored and praised him. Calhoun had now both the Jackson and Adams parties against him, though for different reasons.

Up to this time, until the agitation of the tariff question began, Mr. Calhoun had not been a party man. He was regarded throughout the country as a statesman, rather than as a politician.

But when manufactures of cotton and woollen goods were being established in Lowell, Lawrence, Dover, Great Falls, and other places in New England, wherever there was a water-power to turn the mills, it became obvious that a new tariff would be imposed to protect these infant industries and manufacturing interests everywhere. The tariff of 1824 had borne heavily on the South, producing great irritation, and very naturally "the planters complained that they had to bear all the burdens of protection without enjoying its benefits, — that the things they had to buy had become dearer, while the things produced and exported found a less market." Financial ruin stared them in the face. It seemed to them a great injus-

tice that the interests of the planters should be sacrificed to the monopolists of the North.

In the defence of Southern interests Mr. Calhoun in the Senate at first appealed to reason and patriotism. It is true that he now became a partisan, but he had been sent to Congress as the champion of the cotton lords. He was no more unpatriotic than Webster, who at first, as the representative of the merchants of Boston, advocated freer trade in the interests of commerce, and afterwards, as the representative of Massachusetts at large, turned round and advocated protective duties for the benefit of the manufacturer. It is a nice question, as to where a Congressman should draw the line of advocacy between local and general interests. What are men sent to Congress for, except to advance the interests intrusted to them by their constituents? When are these to be merged in national considerations? Calhoun's mission was to protect Southern interests, and he defended them with admirable logical power. He was one of three great masters of debate in the Senate. No one could reasonably blame him for the opinions he advanced, for he had a right to them; and if he took sectional ground he did as most party leaders do. It was merely a congressional fight.

But when, after the tariff of 1828, it appeared to Calhoun that there was no remedy; that protection

had become the avowed and permanent policy of the government; that the tobacco and cotton of the South, being the chief bulk of our exports, were paying tribute to Northern manufactures, which were growing strong under protection of Federal taxes on competing imports; and that the South was menaced with financial ruin, — he took a new departure, the first serious political error of his life, and became disloyal to the Union.

In July, 1831, he made an elaborate address to the people of South Carolina, in which, discussing the theoretical relations of the States to the Union, he put forth the doctrine that any State could nullify the laws of Congress when it deemed them unconstitutional, as he regarded the existing tariff to be. He looked upon the State, rather than the Union of States, as supreme, and declared that the State could secede if the Union enforced unconstitutional measures. This, as Von Holst points out, practically meant that, "whenever different views are entertained about the powers conferred by the Constitution upon the Federal government, those of the *minority* were to prevail," — an evident absurdity under a republican government.

In June, 1832, was passed another tariff bill, offering some reductions, but still based on protection as the underlying principle. In consequence, South Carolina, entirely subservient to the influence of Calhoun, who in August issued another manifesto, passed in

November the nullification ordinance, to take effect the following February. As already recited, President Jackson took the most vigorous measures, sustained by Congress, and gave the nullifiers clearly to understand that if they resisted the laws of the United States, the whole power of the government would be arrayed against them. They received the proclamation defiantly, and the governor issued a counter one.

It was in this crisis that Calhoun resigned the vice-presidency, and was immediately elected to the United States Senate, where he could fight more advantageously. Then the President sent a message to Congress requesting new powers to put down the nullifiers by force, should the necessity arrive, which were granted, for he was now at the height of his popularity and influence. The nullifiers enraged him, and though they abstained from resorting to extreme measures, they continued their threats. The country appeared to be on the verge of war.

The party leaders felt the necessity of a compromise, and Henry Clay brought forward in the Senate a bill which, in March, 1833, became a law, which reduced the tariff. It apparently appeased the South, not yet prepared to go out of the Union, and the storm blew over. There was no doubt, however, that, had the South Carolinians resisted the government with force of arms they would have been put down,

for Jackson was both infuriated and firm. He had even threatened to hang Calhoun as high as Haman, — an absurd threat, for he had no power to hang anybody, except one with arms in his hands, — and then only through due process of law, — while Calhoun was a Senator, as yet using only legitimate means to gain his ends.

In the compromise which Clay effected, the South had the best of the bargain, and in view of it the culmination of the "irrepressible conflict" was delayed nearly thirty years. Calhoun himself maintained that the Compromise Tariff of 1833 was due to the resistance which his State had made, but he also felt that the Force Bill with which Congress had backed up the President was a standing menace, and, as usual with him, he looked forward to impending dangers. The Compromise Tariff, which reduced duties to twenty per cent in the main, and made provision for still further reduction, found great opponents in the Senate, and was regarded by Webster as anything but a protection bill; nor was Calhoun altogether satisfied with it. It was received with favor by the country generally, however, and South Carolina repealed her nullification ordinance.

That subject being disposed of for the present, the attention of Congress and the country was now turned to the President's war on the United States Bank. As

this most important matter has already been treated in the lecture on Jackson, I have only to show the course Mr. Calhoun took in reference to it. He was now fifty-three years old, in the prime of his life and the full vigor of his powers. In the Senate he had but two peers, Clay and Webster, and was not in sympathy with either of them, though not in decided hostility as he was toward Jackson. He was now neither Whig nor Democrat, but a South Carolinian, having in view the welfare of the South alone, of whose interests he was the recognized guardian. It was only when questions arose which did not directly bear on Southern interests that he was the candid and patriotic statesman, sometimes voting with one party and sometimes with another. He was opposed to the removal of deposits from the United States Bank, and yet was opposed to a renewal of its charter. His leading idea in reference to the matter was, the necessity of divorcing the government altogether from the banking system, as a dangerous money-power which might be perverted to political purposes. In pointing out the dangers, he spoke with great power and astuteness, for he was always on the look-out for breakers. He therefore argued against the removal of deposits as an unwarrantable assumption of power on the part of the President, which could not be constitutionally exercised; here

he agreed with his great rivals, while he was more moderate than they in his language. He made war on measures rather than on men personally, regarding the latter as of temporary importance, of passing interest. So far as the removal of deposits seemed an arbitrary act on the part of the Executive, he severely denounced it, as done with a view to grasp unconstitutional power for party purposes, thus corrupting the country, and as a measure to get control of money. Said he: "With money we will get partisans, with partisans votes, and with votes money, is the maxim of our political pilferers." He regarded the measure as a part of the "spoils system" which marked Jackson's departure from the policy of his predecessors.

Calhoun detested the system of making politics a game, since it would throw the government into the hands of political adventurers and mere machine-politicians. He was too lofty a man to encourage anything like this, and here we are compelled to do him honor. Whatever he said or did was in obedience to his convictions. He was above and beyond all deceit and trickery and personal selfishness. His contempt for political wire-pullers amounted almost to loathing. He was incapable of doing a mean thing. He might be wrong in his views, and hence might do evil instead of good, but he was honest. In his severe self-respect

and cold dignity of character he resembled William Pitt. His integrity was peerless. He could neither be bought nor seduced from his course. Private considerations had no weight with him, except his aspiration for the presidency, and even that seems to have passed away when his disagreement with Jackson put him out of the Democratic race, and when the new crisis arose in Southern interests, to which he ever after devoted himself with entire self-abnegation.

In moral character Calhoun was as reproachless as Washington. He neither drank to excess, nor gambled, nor violated the seventh commandment. He had no fellowship with either fools or knaves. He believed that the office of Senator was the highest to which Americans could ordinarily attain, and he gave dignity to it, and felt its responsibilities. He thought that only the best and most capable men should be elevated to that post. Nor would he seek it by unworthy ends. The office sought him, not he the office. It was this pure and exalted character which gave him such an ascendency at the South, as much as his marvellous logical powers and his devotion to Southern interests. His constituents believed in him and followed him, perhaps blindly. Therefore, when we consider what are generally acknowledged as his mistakes, we should bear in mind the palliating circumstances.

Calhoun was the incarnation of Southern public

opinion, — bigoted, narrow, prejudiced, but intense in its delusions and loyal to its dogmas. Hence he enslaved others as he was himself enslaved. He was alike the idol and the leader of his State, impossible to be dethroned, as Webster was with the people of Massachusetts until he misrepresented their convictions. The consistency of his career was marvellous, — not that he did not change some of his opinions, for there is no intellectual progress to a man who does not. How can a young man, however gifted, be infallible? But whatever the changes through which his mind passed, they did not result from self-interest or ambition, but were the result of more enlightened views and enlarged experience. Political wisdom is not a natural instinct, but a progressive growth, like that of Burke, — the profoundest of all the intellects of his generation.

Calhoun made several great speeches in the Senate of the United States, besides those in reference to a banking system connected with the government, which, whether wise or erroneous, contained some important truths. But the logical deduction of them all may be summed up in one idea, — the supremacy of State rights in opposition to a central government. This, from the time when the diverging interests of the North and the South made him feel the dangers in "the unchecked will of a majority of the whole,"

was the dogma of his life, from which he never swerved, and which he pursued to all its legitimate conclusions. Whatever measure tended to the consolidation of central power, whether in reference to the encroachments of the Executive or the usurpations of Congress, he denounced with terrible earnestness and sometimes with great eloquence. This is the key to the significant portion of his political career.

"In his speech on the Force Bill in 1834, he says:

"If we now raise our eyes and direct them towards that once beautiful system, with all its various, separate, and independent parts blended into one harmonious whole, we must be struck with the mighty change! All have disappeared, gone, — absorbed, concentrated, and consolidated in this government, which is left alone in the midst of the desolation of the system, the sole and unrestricted representative of an absolute and despotic majority . . . In the place of their admirably contrived system, the act proposed to be repealed has erected our great Consolidated Government. Can it be necessary for me to show what must be the inevitable consequences? . . . It was clearly foreseen and foretold on the formation of the Constitution what these consequences would be. All the calamities we have experienced, and those which are yet to come, are the result of the consolidating tendency of this government; and unless this tendency be arrested, all that has been foretold will certainly befall us, — even to the pouring out of the last vial of wrath, military despotism.

That was what Mr. Calhoun feared, — that the consolidation of a central power would be fatal to the

liberties of the country and the rights of the States, and would introduce a system of spoils and the reign of demagogues, all in subserviency to a mere military chieftain, utterly unfit to guide the nation in its complicated interests. But his gloomy predictions fortunately were not fulfilled, in spite of all the misrule and obstinacy of the man he intensely distrusted and disliked. The tendency has been to usurpations by Congress rather than by the Executive.

It is impossible not to admire the lofty tone, free from personal animus, which is seen in all Calhoun's speeches. They may have been sophistical, but they appealed purely to the intellect of those whom he addressed, without the rhetoric of his great antagonists. His speeches are compact arguments, such as one would address to the Supreme Court on his side of the question.

Thus far his speeches in the Senate had been in reference to economic theories and legislation antagonistic to the interests of the South, and the usurpations of executive power, which threatened directly the rights of independent States, and indirectly the liberties of the people and the political degradation of the nation; but now new issues arose from the agitation of the slavery question, and his fame chiefly rests on his persistent efforts to suppress this agitation, as logically leading to the dissolution of the

Union and the destruction of the institution with which its prosperity was supposed to be identified.

The early Abolitionists, as I remember them, were, as a body, of very little social or political influence. They were earnest, clear-headed, and uncompromising in denouncing slavery as a great moral evil, indeed as a sin, disgraceful to a free people, and hostile alike to morality and civilization. But in the general apathy as to an institution with which the Constitution did not meddle, and the general government could not interfere, except in districts and territories under its exclusive control, the Abolitionists were generally regarded as fanatical and mischievous. They had but few friends and supporters among the upper classes and none among politicians. The pulpit, the bar, the press, and the colleges were highly conservative, and did not like the popular agitation much better than the Southerners themselves. But the leaders of the antislavery movement persevered in their denunciations of slaveholders, and of all who sympathized with them; they held public meetings everywhere and gradually became fierce and irritating.

It was the period of lyceum lectures, when all moral subjects were discussed before the people with fearlessness, and often with acrimony. Most of the popular lecturers were men of radical sympathies, and were inclined to view all evils on abstract principles

as well as in their practical effects. Thus, the advocates of peace believed that war under all circumstances was wicked. The temperance reformers insisted that the use of alcoholic liquors in all cases was a sin. Learned professors in theological schools attempted to prove that the wines of Palestine were unfermented, and could not intoxicate. The radical Abolitionists, in like manner, asserted that it was wicked to hold a man in bondage under any form of government, or under any guarantee of the Constitution.

At first they were contented to point out the moral evils of slavery, both on the master and the slave; but this did not provoke much opposition, since the evils were open and confessed, even at the South; only, it was regarded as none of their business, since the evils could not be remedied, and had always been lamented. That slavery was simply an evil, and generally acknowledged to be, both North and South, was taking rather tame ground, even as peace doctrines were unexciting when it was allowed that, if we must fight, we must. But there was some excitement in the questions whether it were allowable to fight at all, or drink wine at any time, or hold a slave under any circumstances. The lecturers must take stronger grounds if they wished to be heard or to excite interest. So they next unhesitatingly assumed the ground that war was

a *malum per se*, and wine-drinking also, and all slaveholding, and a host of other things. Their discussions aroused the intellect, as well as appealed to the moral sense. Even "strong-minded" women fearlessly went into fierce discussions, and became intolerant. Gradually the whole North and West were aroused, not merely to the moral evils of slavery, which were admitted without discussion, but to the intolerable abomination of holding a slave under any conditions, as against reason, against conscience, and against humanity.

The Southerners themselves felt that the evil was a great one, and made some attempt to remedy it by colonization societies. They would send free blacks to Liberia to Christianize and civilize the natives, sunk in the lowest abyss of misery and shame. Many were the Christian men and women at the South who pitied the hard condition under which their slaves were born, and desired to do all they could to ameliorate it.

But when the Abolitionists announced that all slaveholding was a sin, and when public opinion at the North was evidently drifting to this doctrine, then the planters grew indignant and enraged. It became unpleasant for a Northern merchant or traveller to visit a Southern city, and equally unpleasant for a Southern student to enter a Northern college, or a planter to resort to a Northern watering-place. The

common-sense of the planter was outraged when told that he was a sinner above all others. He was exasperated beyond measure when incendiary publications were transmitted through Southern mails. He did not believe that he was necessarily immoral because he retained an institution bequeathed to him by his ancestors, and recognized by the Constitution of the United States.

Calhoun was the impersonation of Southern feelings as well as the representative of Southern interests. He intensely felt the indignity which the Abolitionists cast upon his native State, and upon its peculiar institution. And he was clear-headed enough to see that if public opinion settled down into the conviction that slavery was a sin as well as an inherited evil, the North and South could not long live together in harmony and peace. He saw that any institution would be endangered with the verdict of the civilized world against it. He knew that public opinion was an amazing power, which might be defied, but not successfully resisted. He saw no way to stop the continually increasing attacks of the antislavery agitators except by adopting an entirely new position, — a position which should unite all the slaveholding States in the strongest ties of interest.

Accordingly he declared, as the leader of Southern opinions and interests, that slavery was neither an

evil nor a sin, but a positive good and blessing, supported even by the Bible as well as by the Constitution. In assuming these premises he may have argued logically, but he lost the admiration he had gained by twenty years' services in the national legislature. His premises were wrong, and his arguments would necessarily be sophistical and fall to the ground. He stepped down from the lofty pedestal he had hitherto occupied, to become not merely a partisan, but an unscrupulous politician. He had a right to defend his beloved institutions as the leader of interests intrusted to him to guard. His fault was not in being a partisan, for most politicians are party men; it was in advancing a falsehood as the basis of his arguments. But, if he had stultified his own magnificent intellect, he could not impose on the convictions of mankind. From the time he assumed a ground utterly untenable, whatever were his motives or real convictions, his general influence waned. His arguments did not convince, since they were deductions from wrong premises, and premises which shocked and insulted the reason.

Calhoun now became a man of one idea, and that a false one. He was a gigantic crank, — an arch Jesuit, indifferent to means so long as he could bring about his end; and he became not merely a casuist, but a dictatorial and arrogant politician. He defied that patriotic burst of public opinion which had compelled him to

change his ground, that mighty wave of thought, no more to be resisted than a storm upon the ocean, and which he saw would gradually sweep away his cherished institution unless his constituents and the whole South should be made to feel that their cause was right and just; that slavery had not only materially enriched the Southern States, but had converted fetich idolators to the true worship of God, and widened the domain of civilization. The planters, one and all, responded to this sophistical and seductive plea, and said to one another, "Now we can defy the universe on moral grounds. We stand united, — what care we for the ravings of fanatics outside our borders, so long as our institution is a blessing to us, planted on the rock of Christianity, and endorsed by the best men among us!" The theologians took up the cause, both North and South, and made their pulpits ring with appeals to Scripture. "Were not," they said, "the negroes descendants of Ham, and had not these descendants been cursed by the Almighty, and given over to the control of the children of Shem and Japhet, — not, indeed, to be trodden down like beasts, but to be elevated and softened by them, and made useful in the toils which white men could not endure?" Ultra Calvinists united with politicians in building up a public sentiment in favor of slavery as the best possible condition for the ignorant, sensuous, and super-

stitious races who, when put under the training and guardianship of a civilized and Christian people, had escaped the harder lot which their fathers endured in the deserts and the swamps of Africa.

The agitation at the North had been gradually but constantly increasing. In 1831 William Lloyd Garrison started "The Liberator;" in 1832 the New England Antislavery Society was founded in Boston; in 1833 New York had a corresponding society, and Joshua Leavitt established "The Emancipator." Books, tracts, and other publications began to be circulated. By lectures, newspapers, meetings, and all manner of means the propagandism was carried on. On the other hand, the most violent opposition had been manifested throughout the North to these so-called "fanatics." No language was too opprobrious to apply to them. The churches and ministry were either dumb on the subject, or defended slavery from the Scriptures. Mobs broke up antislavery meetings, and in some cases proceeded even to the extreme of attack and murder, — as in the case of Lovejoy of Illinois. The approach of the political campaign of 1836, when Van Buren was running as the successor of Jackson, involved the Democratic party as the ally of the South for political purposes, and "Harmony and Union" were the offsets to the cry for "Emancipation."

By 1835 the excitement was at its height, and

especially along the line of the moral and religious argumentation, where the proslavery men met talk with talk. What could the Abolitionists do now with their Northern societies to show that slavery was a wrong and a sin? Their weapons fell harmless on the bucklers of warriors who supposed themselves fighting under the protection of Almighty power in order to elevate and Christianize a doomed race. Victory seemed to be snatched from victors, and in the moral contest the Southern planters and their Northern supporters swelled the air with triumphant shouts. They were impregnable in their new defences, since they claimed to be in the right. Both parties had now alike appealed to reason and Scripture, and where were the judges who could settle conflicting opinions?

The Abolitionists, somewhat discouraged, but undaunted, then changed their mode of attack. They said, "We will waive the moral question, for we talk to men without conscience, and we will instead make it a political one. We will appeal to majorities. We will attack the hostile forces in a citadel which they cannot hold. The District of Columbia belongs to Congress. Congress can abolish slavery if it chooses in its own territory. Having possession of this great fortress, we can extend our political warfare to the vast and indefinite West, and, at least, prevent the further extension of slave power. We will trust to

time and circumstance and truth to do the rest. We will petition Congress itself."

And from 1835 onward petitions rolled into both Houses from all parts of the North and West to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, which Congress could constitutionally do. The venerable and enlightened John Quincy Adams headed the group of petitioners in the House of Representatives. There were now two thousand antislavery societies in the United States. In 1837 three hundred thousand persons petitioned for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The legislatures of Massachusetts and Vermont had gone so far as to censure Congress for its inaction and indifference to the rights of humanity.

But it was in January, 1836, that John C. Calhoun arose in his wrath and denied the right of petition. The indignant North responded to such an assumption in flaming words. "What," said the leaders of public opinion, "cannot the lowest subjects of the Czar or the Shah appeal to ultimate authority? Has there ever been an empire so despotic as to deny so obvious a right? Did not Cæsar and Cyrus, Louis and Napoleon receive petitions? Shall an enlightened Congress reject the prayers of the most powerful of their constituents, and to remove an evil which people generally regard as an outrage, and all people as a misfortune?"

"We will not allow the reception of petitions at all," said the Southern leaders, "for they will lead to discussion on a forbidden subject. They are only an entrance wedge to disrupt the Union. The Constitution has guaranteed to us exclusively the preservation of an institution on which our welfare rests. You usurp a privilege which you call a right. Your demands are dangerous to the peace of the Union, and are preposterous. You violate unwritten law. You seek to do what the founders of our republic never dreamed of. When two of the States ceded their own slave territory to the central government, it was with the understanding that slavery should remain as it was in the district we owned and controlled. You cannot lawfully even discuss the matter. It is none of your concern. It is an institution which was the basis of that great compromise without which there never could have been a united nation, — only a league of sovereign States. We have the same right to exclude the discussion of this question from these halls as from the capitals of our respective States. The right of petition on such a subject is tantamount to consideration and discussion, which would be unlawful interference with our greatest institution, leading legitimately and logically to disunion and war. Is it right, is it generous, is it patriotic to drive us to such an alternative? We only ask to be let alone. You

assail a sacred ark where dwell the seraphim and cherubim of our liberties, of our honor, of our interests, of our loyalty itself. To this we never will consent."

Mr. Clay then came forward in Congress as an advocate for considering the question of petitions. He was for free argument on the subject. He admitted that the Abolitionists were dangerous, but he could not shut his eyes to an indisputable right. So he went half-way, as was his custom, pleasing neither party, and alienating friends; but at the same time with great tact laying out a middle ground where the opposing parties could still stand together without open conflict. "I am no friend," said he, "to slavery. The Searcher of hearts knows that every pulsation of mine beats high and strong in the cause of civil liberty. Wherever it is practicable and safe I desire to see every portion of the human family in the enjoyment of it; but I prefer the liberty of my own country to that of other people. The liberty of the descendants of Africa in the United States is incompatible with the liberty and safety of the European descendants." Such were the sentiments of the leading classes of the North, not yet educated up to the doctrines which afterwards prevailed. But the sentiments declared by Clay lost him the presidency. His political sins, like those of Webster, were sins of omission rather than of commission. Neither of them

saw that the little cloud in the horizon would soon cover the heavens, and pour down a deluge to sweep away abominations worse than Ahab ever dreamed of. Clay did not go far enough to please the rising party. He did not see the power or sustain the rightful exercise of this new moral force, but he did argue on grounds of political expediency for the citizens' right of petition, — a right conceded even to the subjects of unlimited despotism. An Ahasuerus could throw petitions into the mire, without reading, but it was customary to accept them.

The result was a decision on the part of Congress to admit the petitions, but to pay no further attention to them.

The Abolitionists, however, had resorted to less scrupulous measures. They sent incendiary matter through the mails, not with the object of inciting the slaves to rebellion, — this was hopeless, — but with the design of aiding their escape from bondage, and perchance of influencing traitors in the Southern camp. To this new attack Calhoun responded with dignity and with logic. And we cannot reasonably blame him for repelling it. The Southern cities had as good a right to exclude inflammatory pamphlets as New York or Boston has to prevent the introduction of the cholera. It was the instinct of self-preservation; whatever may be said of their favorite institution on ethical grounds,

they had the legal right to protect it from incendiary matter.

But what was incendiary matter? Who should determine that point? President Jackson in 1835 had recommended Congress to pass a law prohibiting under severe penalties the circulation in the Southern States, through the mails, of incendiary publications. But this did not satisfy the Southern dictator. He denied the right of Congress to determine what publications should be or should not be excluded. He maintained that this was a matter for the States alone to decide. He would not trust postmasters, for they were officers of the United States government. It was not for them to be inquisitors, nor for the Federal government to interfere, even for the protection of a State institution, with its own judgment. He proposed instead a law forbidding Federal postmasters to deliver publications prohibited by the laws of a State, Territory, or District. In this, as in all other controverted questions, Calhoun found means to argue for the supremacy of the State and the subordination of the Union. His bill did not pass, but the force of his argument went forth into the land.

How far antislavery documents had influence on the slaves themselves, it is difficult to say. They could neither read or write; but it is remarkable that from this period a large number of slaves made their

escape from the South and fled to the North, protected by philanthropists, Abolitionists, and kind-hearted-people generally.

How they contrived to travel a thousand miles without money, without suitable clothing, pursued by blood-hounds and hell-hounds, hiding in the daytime in swamps, morasses, and forests, walking by night in darkness and gloom, until passed by friendly hands through "underground railroads" until they reached Canada, is a mystery. But these efforts to escape from their hard and cruel masters further intensified the exasperation of the South.

It was in 1836 that Michigan and Arkansas applied for admission as States into the Union, — one free and the other with slavery. Discussions on some technicalities concerning the conditions of Michigan's admission gave Mr. Calhoun a chance for more argumentation about the sovereignty of a State, which, considering the fact that Michigan had not then been admitted but was awaiting the permission of Congress *to be* a State, showed the weakness of his logic in the falsity of his premise. Besides Arkansas, the slave-power also gained access to a strip of free territory north of the compromise line of 36°30′ and the Missouri River. In 1837 John Quincy Adams, "the old man eloquent" of the House of Representatives, narrowly escaped censure for introducing a petition from

slaves in the District of Columbia. In 1838 Calhoun introduced resolutions declaring that petitions relative to slavery in the District were "a direct and dangerous attack on the institutions of all the slaveholding States." In 1839 Henry Clay offered a petition for the repression of all agitation respecting slavery in the District. Calhoun saw and constantly denounced the danger. He knew the power of public opinion, and saw the rising tide. Conservatism heeded the warning, and the opposition to agitation intensified all over the South and the North; but to no avail. New societies were formed; new papers were established; religious bodies began to take position for and against the agitation; the Maine legislature passed in the lower House, and almost in the upper, resolutions denouncing slavery in the District; while the Abolitionists labored incessantly and vigorously to "Blow the trumpet; cry aloud and spare not; show my people their sins," as to slavery.

In 1840 Van Buren and Harrison, the Democratic and Whig candidates for the presidency were both in the hands of the slave-power; and Tyler, who as Vice-President succeeded to the Executive chair on Harrison's death, was a Virginian slaveholder. The ruling classes and politicians all over the land were violently opposed to the antislavery cause, and every test of strength gave new securities and pledges to the Southern elements and their Northern sympathizers.

Notwithstanding the frequent triumphs of the South, aided by Whigs and Democrats from the North, who played into the hands of Southern politicians, Mr. Calhoun was not entirely at rest in his mind. He saw with alarm the increasing immigration into the Western States, which threatened to disturb the balance of power which the South had ever held; and with the aid of Southern leaders he now devised a new and bold scheme, which was to annex Texas to the United States and thus enlarge enormously the area of slavery. It was probably his design, not so much to strengthen the slaveholding interests of South Carolina, as to increase the political power of the South. By the addition of new slave States he could hope for more favorable legislation in Congress. The arch conspirator — the haughty and defiant dictator — would not only exclude Congress from all legislation over its own territory in the national District, but he now would make Congress bolster up his cause. He could calculate on a "solid South," and also upon the aid of the leaders of the political parties at the North, — "Northern men with Southern principles," — who were strangely indifferent to the extension of slavery.

The Abolitionists were indeed now a power, but the antislavery sentiment had not reached its culmination, although it had become politically organized.

For the campaign of 1840, seeing the futility of petition and the folly of expecting action on issues foreign to those on which Congressmen had been elected, the Abolitionists boldly called a National Convention, in which six States were represented, and nominated candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. It was a small and despised beginning, but it was the germ of a mighty growth. From that time the Liberty Party began to hold State and National Conventions, and to vote directly on the question of representatives. They did not for years elect anybody, but they defeated many an ultra pro-slavery man, and their influence began to be felt. In 1841 Joshua R. Giddings, from Ohio, and in 1843 John P. Hale from New Hampshire and Hannibal Hamlin from Maine brought in fresh Northern air and confronted the slave-power in Congress, in alliance with grand old John Quincy Adams, — whose last years were his best years, and have illumined his name.

Most of the antislavery men were still denounced as fanatics, meddling with what was none of their business. In 1843 they had not enrolled in their ranks the most influential men in the community. Ministers, professors, lawyers, and merchants generally still held aloof from the controversy, and were either hostile or indifferent to it. So, with the aid of the

"Dough-Faces," as they were stigmatized by the progressive party, Calhoun was confident of success in the Texan scheme.

At that time many adventurers had settled in Texas, which was then a province of Mexico, and had carried with them their slaves. In 1820 Moses Austin, a Connecticut man, long resident in Missouri, obtained large grants of land in Texas from the Mexican government, and his son Stephen carried out after the father's death a scheme of colonization of some three hundred families from Missouri and Louisiana. They were a rough and lawless population, but self-reliant and enterprising. They increased rapidly, until, in 1833, being twenty thousand in number, they tried to form a State government under Mexico; and, this being denied them, declared their independence and made revolution. They were headed by Sam Houston, who had fought under General Jackson, and had been Governor of Tennessee. In 1836 the independence of Texas was proclaimed. Soon after followed the battle of San Jacinto, in which Santa Anna, the President of the Mexican republic and the commander of the Mexican forces, was taken prisoner.

Immediately after this battle Mr. Calhoun tried to have it announced as the policy of the government to recognize the independence of Texas. When Tyler

became President, by the death of Harrison, although elected by Whig votes he entered heart and soul into the schemes of Calhoun, who, to forward them, left the Senate, and became Secretary of State, as successor to Mr. Upshur. In 1843 it became apparent that Texas would be annexed to the United States. In that same year Iowa and Florida — one free, the other slave — were admitted to the Union.

The Liberty party beheld the proposed annexation of Texas with alarm, and sturdily opposed it as far as they could through their friends in Congress, predicting that it would be tantamount to a war with Mexico. The Mexican minister declared the same result. But "Texas or Disunion!" became the rallying cry of the South. The election of Polk, the annexationist Democrat, in 1844, was seized upon as a "popular mandate" for annexation, although had not the Liberty Party, who like the Whigs were anti-annexationists, divided the vote in New York State, Clay would have been elected. The matter was hurried through Congress; the Northern Democrats made no serious opposition, since they saw in this annexation a vast accession of territory around the Gulf of Mexico, of indefinite extent. Thus, Texas, on March 1, 1845, was offered annexation by a Joint Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives, in the face of protests from the wisest men of the country, and in

spite of certain hostilities with Mexico. On the following fourth of July Texas, accepting annexation, was admitted to the Union as a slave State, to the dismay of Channing, of Garrison, of Phillips, of Sumner, of Adams, and of the whole antislavery party, now aroused to the necessity of more united effort, in view of this great victory to the South; for it was provided that at any time, by the consent of its own citizens, Texas might be divided into four States, whenever its population should be large enough; its territory was four times as large as France.

The Democratic President Polk took office in March, 1845; the Mexican War, beginning in May, 1846, was fought to a successful close in a year and five months, ending September, 1847; the fertile territory of Oregon, purchased from Spain, had been peaceably occupied by rapid immigration and by settlement of disputed boundaries with Great Britain; California —a Mexican province — had been secured to the American settlers of its lovely hills and valleys by the prompt daring of Capt. John C. Frémont; and the result of the war was the formal cession to the United States by Mexico of the territories of California and New Mexico, and recognition of the annexation and statehood of Texas.

Both the North and the South had thus gained large possibilities, and at the North the spirit of

enterprise and the clear perception of the economic value of free labor as against slave labor were working mightily to help men see the moral arguments of the antislavery people. The division of interest was becoming plain; the forces of good sense and the principles of liberty were consolidating the North against farther extension of the slave-power. The perils foreseen by Calhoun, which he had striven to avoid by repression of all political discussion of slavery, were nigh at hand. The politicians of the North, too, scented the change, and began to range themselves with their section; and, while there was a long struggle yet ahead before the issues would be made up, to the eye of faith the end was already in sight, and the "Free Soilers" now redoubled their efforts both in discussion and in political action.

Thus far, most of the political victories had been with the slave-power, and the South became correspondently arrogant and defiant. The war of ideas against Southern interests now raged with ominous and increasing force in all the Northern States. Public opinion became more and more inflamed. Passions became excited in cities and towns and villages which had been dormant since the Constitution had been adopted. The decree of the North went forth that there should be no more accession of slave territory; and, more than this, the population spread with unex-

ampled rapidity toward the Pacific Ocean in consequence of the discovery of gold in California, in 1848, and attracted by the fertile soil of Oregon. Immigrants from all nations came to seek their fortunes in territories north of 36°30′.

What Calhoun had anticipated in 1836, when he cast his eyes on Texas, did not take place. Slave territory indeed was increased, but free territory increased still more rapidly. The North was becoming richer and richer, and the South scarcely held its own. The balance which he thought would be in favor of the South, he now saw inclining to the North. Northern States became more numerous than Southern ones, and more populous, more wealthy, and more intelligent. The political power of the Union, when Mr. Polk closed his inglorious administration, was perceptibly with the North, and not political power only, but moral power. The great West was the soil of freemen.

But the haughty and defiant spirit of Calhoun was not broken. He prophesied woes. He became sad and dejected, but more and more uncompromising, more and more dictatorial. He would not yield. "If we yield an inch," said he, "we are lost." The slightest concession, in his eyes, would be fatal. When he declared his nullification doctrines it was because he thought that State rights were invaded by hostile

tariffs. But after the Mexican War slavery was to him a matter of life and death. He made many excellent and powerful speeches, which tasked the intellect of Webster to refute; but, whatever the subject, it was seen only through his Southern spectacles, and argued from partisan grounds and with partisan zeal. Everything he uttered was with a view of consolidating the South, and preparing it for disunion and secession, as the only way to preserve the beloved institution. In his eyes, slavery and the Union could not co-exist. This he saw plainly, but if either must perish it should be the Union; and this doctrine he so constantly reiterated that he won over to it nearly the entire South. But in consolidating the South, he also consolidated the North. He forced on the issue, believing that even yet the South, united with Northern allies, was the stronger, and that it could establish its independence on a slavery basis. The Union was no union at all, and its Constitution was a worthless parchment. "He proposed a convention of the Southern States which should agree that, until full justice was rendered to the South, all the Southern ports should be closed to the sea-going vessels of the North." He arrogantly would deprive the North even of its constitutional rights in reference to the exclusion of slavery from the Territories. In no way should the North meddle with the slavery question, on pen-

alty of secession; and the sooner this was understood the better. "We are," said he, "relatively stronger than we shall be hereafter, politically and morally."

The great fight arose in 1849. The people in the Northwestern territories had been encouraged to form governments, and had already tasted the delights of self-rule. President Polk had recommended the extension of the old Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30′ westward to the Pacific, leaving the territory south of that open to slavery. This would divide California, and was opposed by all parties. Calhoun now went so far as to claim the constitutional right to take slaves into any Territory, while Webster argued the power of Congress to rule the Territories until they should become States. So excited was the discussion that a convention of Southern States was held to frame a separate government for the "United States South." The threat of secession was ever their most potent argument. The contest in Congress centred upon the admission of California as a State and the condition of slavery in the Territories of Utah and New Mexico.

A great crisis had now arrived. Clay, "the great pacificator," once more stepped into the arena with a new compromise. To provide for concessions on either side, he proposed the admission of California (whose new constitution prohibited slavery); the organization

of Utah and New Mexico as Territories without mention of slavery (leaving it to the people); the arrangement of the boundary of Texas; the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; and the enactment of a more stringent fugitive-slave law, commanding the assistance of people in the free States to capture runaways, when summoned by the authorities.

The general excitement over the discussion of this bill will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The South raged, and the North blazed with indignation, — especially over the Fugitive-Slave Bill.

Meanwhile Calhoun was dying. His figure was bent, his voice was feeble, his face was haggard, but his superb intellect still retained its vigor to the last. Among the multitude of ringing appeals to the reason and moral sense of the North was a newspaper article from *The Independent* of New York, by a young Congregational minister, Henry Ward Beecher. It was entitled "Shall we Compromise?" and made clear and plain the issue before the people: "Slavery is right; Slavery is wrong: Slavery shall live; Slavery shall die: are these conflicts to be settled by any mode of parcelling out certain Territories?" This article was read to Calhoun upon his dying bed. "Who wrote that?" he asked. The name was given him. "That man understands the thing. He has gone to the bottom of it. He will be heard from again." It was

what the great Southerner had foreseen and foretold from the first.

The compromise bill at last became a law. It averted the final outbreak for ten years longer, but contained elements that were to be potent factors in insuring the final crisis.

With the burden of the whole South upon his shoulders Calhoun tottered to the grave a most unhappy man, for though he saw the "irrepressible conflict" as clearly as Seward had done, he also saw that the South, even if successful, as he hoped, must go through a sea of tribulation. When he was no longer able to address the Senate in person he still waged the battle. His last great speech was read to the Senate by Mr. Mason of Virginia, on the 4th of March, 1850. It was not bitter, nor acrimonious; it was a doleful lament that the Southern States could not long remain in the Union with any dignity, now that the equilibrium was destroyed. He felt that he had failed, but also that he had done his duty; and this was his only consolation in view of approaching disasters. On the last day of March he died, leaving behind him his principles, so full of danger and sophistries, but at the same time an unsullied name, and the memory of earlier public services and of private virtues which had secured to him the respect of all who knew him.

In reviewing the career of Mr. Calhoun it would

seem that the great error and mistake of his life was his disloyalty to the Union. When he advocated State rights as paramount over those of the general government he merely took the ground which was discussed over and over again at the formation of the Constitution, and which resulted in a compromise that, with control over matters of interest common to all States, the central government should have no power over the institution of slavery, which was a domestic affair in the Southern States. Only these States, it was settled, had supreme control over their own "peculiar institution." As a politician, representing Southern interests, he cannot be severely condemned for his fear and anger over the discussion of the slavery question, which, politically considered, was out of the range of Congressional legislation or popular agitation. But when he advocated or threatened the secession of the Southern States from the Union, unless the slavery question was let alone entirely both by Congress and the Northern States, he was unpatriotic, false in his allegiance, and unconstitutional in his utterances. A State has a right to enter the Union or not, remaining of course, in either case, United States territory, over which Congress has legislative power. But when once it has entered into the Union, it must remain there as a part of the whole. Otherwise the States would be a mere league, as in the Revolutionary times.

Mr. Calhoun had a right to bring the whole pressure of the slave States on a congressional vote on any question. He could say, as the Irish members of Parliament say, "Unless you do this or that we will obstruct the wheels of government, and thus compel the consideration of our grievances, so long as we hold the balance of power between contending parties." But it is quite another thing for the Irish legislators to say, "Unless you do this or that, we will secede from the Union," which Ireland could not do without war and revolution. Mr. Calhoun, in his onesidedness, entirely overlooked the fact that the discontented States could not secede without a terrible war; for if there is one sentiment dear to the American people, it is the preservation of the Union, and for it they will make any sacrifice.

And the same may be said in reference to Calhoun's nullification doctrines. He would, if he could, have taken his State out of the Union, because he and the South did not like the tariff. He had the right, as a Senator in Congress, to bring all the influence he could command to compel Congress to modify the tariff, or abolish it altogether. And with this he ought to have been contented. With a solid South and a divided North, he could have compelled a favorable compromise, or prevented any legislation at all. It is legitimate legislation for members of Congress to maintain

their local and sectional interest at any cost, short of disunion; only, it may be neither wise nor patriotic, since men who are supposed to be statesmen would by so doing acknowledge themselves to be mere politicians, bound hand and foot in subjection to selfish constituents, and indifferent to the general good.

Mr. Calhoun became blind to general interests in his zeal to perpetuate slavery, or advance whatever would be desirable to the South, indifferent to the rest of the country; and thus he was a mere partisan, narrow and local. What made him so powerful and popular at the South equally made him to be feared and distrusted at the North. He was a firebrand, infinitely more dangerous and incendiary than any Abolitionist whom he denounced. Calhoun's congressional career was the opposite of that of Henry Clay, who was more patriotic and more of a statesman, for he always professed allegiance to the whole Union, and did all he could to maintain it. His whole soul was devoted to tariffs and internal improvements, but he would yield important points to produce harmony and ward off dangers. Calhoun, with his State-sovereignty doctrines, his partisanship, and his unscrupulous defiance of the Constitution, forfeited his place among great statesmen, and lost the esteem and confidence of a majority of his countrymen, except so far as his abilities and his unsullied private life entitled him to admiration.

AUTHORITIES.

I know of no abler and more candid life of Calhoun than that of Von Holst. Although deficient in incidents, it is no small contribution to American literature, apparently drawn from a careful study of the speeches of the great Nullifier. If the author had had more material to work upon, he would probably have made a more popular work, such as Carl Schurz has written of Henry Clay, and Henry Cabot Lodge of Daniel Webster and Alexander Hamilton. In connection read the biographies of Clay, Webster, and Jackson; see Wilson's History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power, also Benton's Thirty Years of Congressional History, and Calhoun's Speeches.

LXXXI.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

CIVIL WAR: PRESERVATION OF THE UNION.

1809–1865.

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IN the year 1830, or thereabouts, a traveller on the frontier settlements of Illinois (if a traveller was ever known in those dreary regions) might have seen a tall, gaunt, awkward, homely, sad-looking young man of twenty-one, clothed in a suit of brown jean dyed with walnut-bark, hard at work near a log cabin on the banks of the river Sangamon, — a small stream which emptied into the Ohio River. The man was splitting rails, which he furnished to a poor woman in exchange for some homespun cloth to make a pair of trousers, at the rate of four hundred rails per yard. His father, one of the most shiftless of the poor whites of Kentucky, a carpenter by trade, had migrated to Indiana, and, after a short residence, had sought another home on a bluff near the Sangamon River, where he had cleared, with the assistance of his son, about fifteen acres of land. From this he gained a miserable and precarious living.

The young rail-splitter had also a knack of slaughtering hogs, for which he received thirty cents a day. Physically he had extraordinary strength, and no one could beat him in wrestling and other athletic exercises. Mentally, he was bright, inquiring, and not wholly illiterate. He had learned, during his various peregrinations, to read, write, and cipher. He was reliable and honest, and had in 1828 been employed, when his father lived in Indiana, by a Mr. Gentry, to accompany his son to New Orleans, with a flat-boat of produce, which he sold successfully.

It is not my object to dwell on the early life of Abraham Lincoln. It has been made familiar by every historian who has written about him, in accordance with the natural curiosity to know the beginnings of illustrious men; and the more humble, the more interesting these are to most people. It is quite enough to say that no man in the United States ever reached eminence from a more obscure origin.

Rail-splitting did not achieve the results to which the ambition of young Lincoln aspired, so he contrived to go into the grocery business; but in this he was unsuccessful, owing to an inherent deficiency in business habits and aptitude. He was, however, gifted with shrewd sense, a quick sense of humor with keen wit, and a marked steadiness of character, which gained him both friends and popularity in the miserable little

community where he lived; and in 1832 he was elected captain of a military company to fight Indians in the Black Hawk War. There is no evidence that he ever saw the enemy. He probably would have fought well had he been so fortunate as to encounter the foe; for he was cool, fearless, strong, agile, and active without rashness. In 1833 he was made postmaster of a small village; but the office paid nothing, and his principal profit from it was the opportunity to read newspapers and some magazine trash. He was still very poor, and was surrounded with rough people who lived chiefly on corn bread and salt pork, who slept in cabins without windows, and who drank whiskey to excess, yet who were more intelligent than they seemed.

Such was Abraham Lincoln at the age of twenty-four, — obscure, unknown, poverty-stricken, and without a calling. Suppose at that time some supernatural being had appeared to him in a dream, and announced that he would some day be President of the United States; and not merely this, but that he would rule the nation in a great crisis, and save it from dismemberment and anarchy by force of wisdom and character, and leave behind him when he died a fame second only to that of Washington! Would he not have felt, on awaking from his dream, pretty much as did the aged patriarch whose name he bore, when the angel of the Lord assured him that he would be

the father of many nations, that his seed would outnumber the sands of the sea, and that through him all humanity would be blessed from generation to generation? Would he not have felt as the stripling David, among the sheep and the goats of his father's flocks, when the prophet Samuel announced to him that he should be king over Israel, and rule with such success and splendor that the greatness and prosperity of the Jewish nation would be forever dated from his matchless reign?

The obscure postmaster, without a dollar in his pocket, and carrying the mail in his hat, had indeed no intimation of his future elevation: but his career was just as mysterious as that of David, and an old-fashioned religious man would say that it was equally providential; for of all the leading men of this great nation it would seem that he turned out to be the fittest for the work assigned to him, — chosen, not because he was learned or cultivated or experienced or famous, or even interesting, but because his steps were so ordered that he fell into the paths which naturally led to his great position, although no genius could have foreseen the events which logically controlled the result. If Lincoln had not been gifted with innate greatness, though unknown to himself and all the world, to be developed as occasions should arise, no fortunate circumstances could have produced so ex-

traordinary a career. If Lincoln had not the germs of greatness in him, — certain qualities which were necessary for the guidance of a nation in an emergency, — to be developed subsequently as the need came, then his career is utterly insoluble according to any known laws of human success; and when history cannot solve the mysteries of human success, — in other words, "justify the ways of Providence to man," — then it loses half its charm, and more than half its moral force. It ceases to be the great teacher which all nations claim it to be.

However obscure the birth of Lincoln, and untoward as were all the circumstances which environed him, he was doubtless born ambitious, that is, with a strong and unceasing desire to "better his condition." That at the age of twenty-four he ever dreamed of reaching an exalted position is improbable. But when he saw the ascendency that his wit and character had gained for him among rude and uncultivated settlers on the borders of civilization, then, being a born leader of men, as Jackson was, it was perfectly natural that he should aspire to be a politician. Politics ever have been the passion of Western men with more than average ability, and it required but little learning and culture under the sovereignty of "squatters" to become a member of the State legislature, especially in the border States, where population was sparse, and the people mostly poor and ignorant.

Hence, "smart" young men, in rude villages, early learned to make speeches in social and political meetings. Every village had its favorite stump orator, who knew all the affairs of the nation, and a little more, and who, with windy declamation, amused and delighted his rustic hearers. Lincoln was one of these. There was never a time, even in his early career, when he could not make a speech in which there was more wit than knowledge; although as he increased in knowledge he also grew in wisdom, and his good sense, with his habit of patient thinking, gave him the power of clear and convincing statement. Moreover, at twenty-four, he was already tolerably intelligent, and had devoured all the books he could lay his hand upon. Indeed, it was to the reading of books that Lincoln, like Henry Clay, owed pretty much all his schooling. Beginning with Weems's "Life of Washington" when a mere lad, he perseveringly read, through all his fortunes, all manner of books, — not only during leisure hours by day, when tending mill or store, but for long months by the light of pine shavings from the cooper's shop at night, and in later times when traversing the country in his various callings. And his persistent reading gave him new ideas and broader views.

With his growing thoughts his aspirations grew. So, like others, he took the stump, and as early as 1832

offered himself a candidate for the State legislature. His maiden speech in an obscure village is thus reported: "Fellow citizens, I am humble Abraham Lincoln. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a National Bank, of internal improvements, and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same."

Lincoln was not elected, although supported by the citizens of New Salem, where he lived, and to whom he had promised the improvement of the Sangamon River. Disappointed, he went into the grocery business once again, and again failed, partly because he had no capital, and partly because he had no business talents in that line; although from his known integrity he was able to raise what money he needed. He then set about the study of the law, as a step to political success, read books, and the occasional newspapers, told stories, and kept his soul in patience, — which was easier to him than to keep his body in decent clothes.

It was necessary for him to do something for a living while he studied law, since the grocery business had failed, and hence he became an assistant to John Calhoun, the county surveyor, who was overburdened with work. Just as he had patiently worked through an English Grammar, to enable him to speak correctly,

he took up a work on surveying and prepared himself for his new employment in six weeks. He was soon enabled to live more decently, and to make valuable acquaintances, meanwhile diligently pursuing his law studies, not only during his leisure, but even as he travelled about the country to and from his work; on foot or on horseback, his companion was sure to be a law-book.

In 1834 a new election of representatives for the State legislature took place, and Lincoln became a candidate, — this time with more success, owing to the assistance of influential friends. He went to Vandalia, the State capital, as a Whig, and a great admirer of Henry Clay. He was placed on the Committee of Public Accounts and Expenditures, but made no mark; yet that he gained respect was obvious from the fact that he was re-elected by a very large vote. He served a second term, and made himself popular by advocating schemes to "gridiron" every county with railroads, straighten out the courses of rivers, dig canals, and cut up the State into towns, cities, and house-lots. One might suppose that a man so cool and sensible as he afterwards proved himself to be must have seen the absurdity of these wild schemes, and hence only fell in with them from policy as a rising member of the legislature, to gain favor with his constituents. Yet he and his colleagues were all

crude and inexperienced legislators, and it is no discredit to Lincoln that he was borne along with the rest in an enthusiasm for "developing the country." The mania for speculation was nearly universal, especially in the new Western States. Illinois alone projected 1,350 miles of railroad, without money and without credit to carry out this Bedlam legislation, and in almost every village there were "corner lots" enough to be sold to make a great city. Aside from this participation in a bubble destined to burst, and to be followed by disasters, bankruptcies, and universal distress, Lincoln was credited with steadiness, and gained great influence. He was prominent in securing the passage of a bill which removed the seat of government to Springfield, and was regarded as a good debater. In this session, too, he and Daniel Stone, the two representatives from Sangamon County, introduced a resolution declaring that the institution of slavery was "founded on both injustice and bad policy;" that the Congress had no power to interfere with slavery in the States; that it had power in the District of Columbia, but should not exercise it unless at the request of the people of the District. There were no votes for these resolutions, but it is interesting to see how early Lincoln took both moral and constitutional ground concerning national action on this vexed question.

In March, 1837, Lincoln, then twenty-eight years old, was admitted to the bar, and made choice of Springfield, the new capital, as a residence, then a thriving village of one or two thousand inhabitants, with some pretension to culture and refinement. It was certainly a political, if not a social centre. The following year he was again elected to the legislature, and came within a few votes of being made Speaker of the House. He carried on the practice of the law with his duties as a legislator. Indeed, law and politics went hand in hand; as a lawyer he gained influence in the House of Representatives, and as a member of the legislature he increased his practice in the courts. He had for a partner a Major Stuart, who in 1841 left him, having been elected Representative in Congress, and was succeeded in the firm by Stephen T. Logan. Lincoln's law practice was far from lucrative, and he was compelled to live in the strictest economy. Litigation was very simple, and it required but little legal learning to conduct cases. The lawyers' fees were small among a people who were mostly poor. Considering, however, his defective education and other disadvantages, Lincoln's success as a lawyer was certainly respectable, if not great, in his small sphere.

In 1840, three years after his admission to the bar, Lincoln was chosen as an elector in the Harrison presi-

dential contest, and he stumped the State, frequently encountering Stephen A. Douglas in debate, with great credit to himself, for Douglas was the most prominent political orator of the day. The heart of Lincoln, from the start, was in politics rather than the law, for which he had no especial liking. He was born to make speeches in political gatherings, and not to argue complicated legal questions in the courts. All his aspirations were political. As early as 1843 he aspired to be a member of Congress, but was defeated by Colonel Baker. In 1846, however, his political ambition was gratified by an election to the House of Representatives. His record in Congress was a fair one; but he was not distinguished, although great questions were being discussed in connection with the Mexican War. He made but three speeches during his term, in the last of which he ridiculed General Cass's aspiration for the presidency with considerable humor and wit, which was not lost on his constituents. His career in Congress terminated in 1848, he not being re-elected.

In the mean time Lincoln married, in 1842, Miss Mary Todd, from Lexington, Kentucky, a lady of good education and higher social position than his own, whom he had known for two or three years. As everybody knows, this marriage did not prove a happy one, and domestic troubles account, in a measure, for Lincoln's sad and melancholy countenance. Biographers

have devoted more space than is wise to this marriage, since the sorrows of a great man claim but small attention compared with his public services. Had Lincoln not been an honorable man, it is probable that the marriage would never have taken place, in view of incompatibilities of temper which no one saw more clearly than he himself, and which disenchanted him. The engagement was broken, and renewed, for, as the matter stood, — the lady being determined and the lover uncertain, — the only course consistent with Lincoln's honor was to take the risk of marriage, and devote himself with renewed ardor to his profession, to bury his domestic troubles in work, and persistently avoid all quarrels. And this is all the world need know of this sad affair, which, though a matter of gossip, never was a scandal. It is unfortunate for the fame of many great men that we know too much of their private lives. Mr. Froude, in his desire of historical impartiality, did no good to the memory of his friend Carlyle. Had the hero's peculiarities been vices, like those of Byron, the biographer might have cited them as warnings to abate the ardor of popular idolatry of genius. If we knew no more of the private failings of Webster than we do of those of Calhoun or Jefferson Davis, he might never have been dethroned from the lofty position he occupied, which, as a public benefactor, he did not deserve to lose.

After his marriage, Lincoln was more devoted to his profession, and gradually became a good lawyer; but I doubt if he was ever a great one, like his friend Judge Davis. His law partner and biographer, William H. Herndon, who became associated with him in 1845, is not particularly eulogistic as to his legal abilities, although he concedes that he had many of the qualities of a great lawyer, such as the ability to see important points, lucidity of statement, and extraordinary logical power. He did not like to undertake the management of a case which had not justice and right on its side. He had no method in his business, and detested mechanical drudgery. He rarely studied law-books, unless in reference to a case in which he was employed. He was not learned in the decisions of the higher courts. He was a poor defender of a wrong cause, but was unappalled by the difficulties of an intricate case; was patient and painstaking, and not imposed upon by sophistries.

Lincoln's love of truth, for truth's sake, even in such a technical matter as the law, was remarkable. No important error ever went undetected by him. His intellectual vision was clear, since he was rarely swayed by his feelings. As an advocate he was lucid, cold, and logical, rather than rhetorical or passionate. He had no taste for platitudes and "glittering generalities." There was nothing mercenary in his practice,

and with rare conscientiousness he measured his charges by the services rendered, contented if the fees were small. He carried the strictest honesty into his calling, which greatly added to his influence. If there was ever an honest lawyer he was doubtless one. Even in arguing a case, he never misrepresented the evidence of a witness, and was always candid and fair. He would frequently, against his own interest, persuade a litigant of the injustice of his case, and induce him to throw it up. If not the undisputed leader of his circuit, he was the most beloved. Sometimes he disturbed the court by his droll and humorous illustrations, which called out irrepressible laughter, but generally he was grave and earnest in matters of importance; and he was always at home in the court-room, quiet, collected, and dignified, awkward as was his figure and his gesticulation.

But it was not as a lawyer that Lincoln was famous. Nor as a public speaker would he compare with Douglas in eloquence or renown. As a member of Congress it is not probable that he would ever have taken a commanding rank, like Clay or Webster or Calhoun, or even like Seward. His great fame rests on his moral character, his identification with a great cause, his marvellous ability as a conservative defender of radical principles, and his no less wonderful tact as a leader of men.

The cause for which he stands was the Antislavery movement, as it grew into a political necessity rather than as a protest against moral evil. Although from his youth an antislavery man, Lincoln was not an Abolitionist in the early days of the slavery agitation. He rather kept aloof from the discussion, although such writers as Theodore Parker, Dr. Channing, and Horace Greeley had great charm for him. He was a politician, and therefore discreet in the avowal of opinions. His turn of mind was conservative and moderate, and therefore he thought that all political action should be along the lines established by law under the Constitution.

But when the Southern leaders, not content with non-interference by Congress with their favorite institution in their own States, sought to compel Congress to allow the extension of slavery in the Territories it controlled, then the indignation of Lincoln burst the bounds, and he became the leader in his State in opposition to any movement to establish in national territory that institution "founded on both injustice and bad policy." Although he was in Congress in 1847–8, his political career really began about the year 1854, four years after the death of Calhoun.

As has been shown in previous chapters, the great slavery agitation of 1850, when the whole country was convulsed by discussions and ominous threats of

disunion, was laid at rest for a while by the celebrated compromise bill which Henry Clay succeeded in passing through Congress. By the terms of this compromise California was admitted to the Union as a free State; the Territories of New Mexico and Utah were organized to come in as States, with or without slavery as their people might determine when the time should arrive; the domestic slave-trade in the District of Columbia was abolished; a more stringent fugitive-slave law was passed; and for the adjustment of State boundaries, which reduced the positive slave-area in Texas and threw it into the debatable territory of New Mexico, Texas received ten millions of dollars. Although this adjustment was not entirely satisfactory to either the North or the South, the nation settled itself for a period of quiet to repair the waste and utilize the conquests of the Mexican War. It became absorbed in the expansion of its commerce, the development of its manufactures, and the growth of its emigration, all quickened by the richness of its marvellous new gold fields, — until, unexpectedly and suddenly, it found itself once again plunged into political controversy more distracting and more ominous than the worst it had yet experienced.

For, while calmly accepting the divers political arrangements made for distant States and Territories, the men of the North, who had fumed and argued

against the passage of the Fugitive-Slave Law, when its enforcement was attempted in their very presence were altogether outraged. When the "man-hunters" chased and caught negroes in their village market-places and city streets, when free men were summoned to obey that law by helping to seize trembling fugitives and send them back to worse than death, then they burst forth in a fierce storm of rage that could not be quieted. The agitation rose and spread; lecturers thundered; newspapers denounced; great meetings were held; politicians trembled. And even yet the conservatism of the North was not wholly inflamed; for political partisanship is in itself a kind of slavery, and while the Northern Democrats stood squarely with the South, the Northern Whigs, fearing division and defeat, made strenuous efforts to stand on both sides, and, admitting slavery to be an "evil," to uphold the Fugitive-Slave Law because it was a part of the "great compromise." In Congress and out, in national conventions, and with all the power of the party press, this view was strenuously advocated; but in 1852 the Democrats elected Franklin Pierce as President, while the compromising Whigs were cast out. Webster, the leader of the compromisers, had not even secured a nomination, but General Scott was the Whig candidate; while William H. Seward, at the head of the Antislavery Whigs, had at least the satisfaction

of seeing that, amid the dissolving elements of the Whig party, the antislavery sentiment was gaining strength day by day. The old issues of tariffs and internal improvements were losing their vitality, while *Freedom* and *Slavery* were the new poles about which new crystallizations were beginning to form.

But the Compromise of 1850 had loosed from its Pandora's box another fomenter of trouble, in the idea of leaving to the people of the Territories the settlement of whether their incoming States should be slave or free, — the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" as it was called. The nation had accepted that theory as a makeshift for the emergency of that day; but slave cultivation had already exhausted much of the Southern land, and, not content with Utah and New Mexico for their propagandism, the slaveholders cast envious eyes upon the great territory of the Northwest, stretching out from the Missouri border, although it was north of the prohibited line of 36° 30′. And so it came about that, within four short years after the compromise of 1850, the unrest of the North under the Fugitive-Slave Law, followed by the efforts of the South to break down the earlier compromise of 1821, awoke again with renewed fierceness the slavery agitation, in discussing the bill for the organization of the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, — an immense area, extending from the borders of Missouri, Iowa,

and Minnesota, west to the Rocky Mountains, and from the line of 36° 30′ north to British America.

The mover of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, a Democrat and a man of remarkable abilities, now came into prominent notice. He wanted to be President of the United States, and his popularity, his legal attainments, his congressional services, his attractive eloquence and skill in debate, marked him out as the rising man of his party. He was a Vermonter by birth, and like Lincoln had arisen from nothing, — a self-made man, so talented that the people called him "the little giant," but nevertheless inferior to the giants who had led the Senate for twenty years, while equal to them in ambition, and superior as a wire-pulling politician. He was among those who at first supposed that the Missouri Compromise of 1821 was a final settlement, and was hostile to the further agitation of the slavery question. He was a great believer in "American Destiny," and the absorption of all North America in one grand confederation, in certain portions of which slavery should be tolerated. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories he had great influence in opening new routes of travel, and favored the extension of white settlements, even in territory which had been given to the Indians.

To further his ambitious aspirations Douglas began

now to court the favor of Southern leaders, and introduced his famous Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which was virtually the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, inasmuch as it opened the vast territories to the north of 36° 30′ to the introduction of slavery if their people should so elect. This the South needed, to secure what they called the balance of power, but what was really the preponderance of the Slave States, or at least the curtailment of the political power of the Free States. In 1854, during the administration of Franklin Pierce, and under the domination of the Democratic party, which played into the hands of the Southern leaders, the compromise which Clay had effected in 1821 was repealed under the influence of his compromise of 1850, and the slavery question was thus reopened for political discussion in every State of the Union, — showing how dangerous it is to compromise principle in shaping a policy.

Popular indignation at the North knew no bounds at this new retrograde movement. The Whigs uttered protests, while the Free Soil party, just coming into notice, composed mainly of moderate antislavery men from both the old parties, were loud in their denunciations of the encroachments of the South. Even some leading Democrats opened their eyes, and joined the rising party. The newspapers, the pulpits, and the platforms sent forth a united cry of wrath. The Whigs

and the Abolitionists were plainly approaching each other. The year 1854 saw a continuous and solid political campaign to repress the further spread of slavery. The Territories being then thrown open, there now began an intense emulation to people them, on the one hand, with advocates of slavery, and on the other, with free-soilers. Emigration societies were founded to assist *bona fide* settlers, and a great tide of families poured into Kansas from the Northern States, while the Southern States, and chiefly Missouri, sent also large numbers of men.

At the South the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was universally welcomed, and the Southern leaders felt encouragement and exultation. The South had gained a great victory, aided by Northern Democrats, and boldly denounced Chase, Hale, Sumner, Seward, and Giddings in the Senate as incendiaries, plotting to destroy precious rights. A memorable contest took place in the House of Representatives to prevent the election of Banks of Massachusetts as Speaker. But the tide was beginning to turn, and Banks, by a vote of 113 against 104, obtained the Speakership.

Then followed "border ruffianism" in Kansas, when armed invaders from Missouri, casting thousands of illegal votes, elected, by fraud and violence, a legislature favorable to slavery, accompanied with civil war, in which the most disgraceful outrages were

perpetrated, the central government at Washington being blind and deaf and dumb to it all. The *bona fide* settlers in Kansas who were opposed to slavery then assembled at Topeka, refused to recognize the bogus laws, and framed a constitution which President Pierce — "a Northern man with Southern principles," gentlemanly and cultivated, but not strong — pronounced to be revolutionary. Nor was ruffianism confined to Kansas. In 1856 Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, one of the most eloquent and forceful denunciators of all the pro-slavery lawlessness, was attacked at his desk in the Senate chamber, after an adjournment, and unmercifully beaten with a heavy cane by Preston Brooks, a member of the House of Representatives, and nephew of Senator Butler of South Carolina. It took years for Sumner to recover, while the aristocratic ruffian was unmolested, and went unpunished; for, though censured by the House and compelled to resign his seat, he was immediately re-elected by his constituents.

But this was not all. In that same year the Supreme Court came to the aid of the South, already supported by the Executive and the Senate. Six judges out of nine, headed by Chief Justice Taney, pronounced judgment that slaves, whether fugitive or taken by their masters into the free States, should be returned to their owners. This celebrated case arose

in Missouri, where a negro named Dred Scott — who had been taken by his master to States where slavery was prohibited by law, who had, with his master's consent, married and had children in the free States, and been brought back to Missouri — sued for his freedom. The local court granted it; the highest court of the State reversed the decision; and on appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States the case was twice argued there, and excited a wide and deep interest. The court might have simply sent it back, as a matter belonging to the State court to decide; but it permitted itself to argue the question throughout, and pronounced on the natural inferiority of the negro, and his legal condition as property, the competence of the State courts to decide his freedom or slavery, and the right of slaveholders under the Constitution to control their property in the free States or Territories, any legislation by Congress or local legislatures to the contrary notwithstanding. This was the climax of slavery triumphs. The North and West, at last aroused, declared in conventions and legislative halls that slavery should advance no further. The conflict now indeed became "irrepressible."

At this crisis Abraham Lincoln stepped upon the political stage, and his great career began.

As a local lawyer, even as a local politician, his work was practically done. He came forth as an

avowed antagonist of Douglas, who was the strongest man in Illinois, and the leader of the Democratic party in Congress. He came forth as the champion of the antislavery cause in his native State, and soon attracted the eyes of the whole nation. His memorable controversy with Douglas was the turning-point of his life. He became a statesman, as well as a patriot, broad, lofty, and indignant at wrongs. Theretofore he had been a conservative Whig, a devoted follower of Clay. But as soon as the Missouri Compromise was repealed he put forth his noblest energies in behalf of justice, of right, and of humanity.

As he was driving one day from a little town in which court had been held, a brother lawyer said to him, "Lincoln, the time is coming when we shall either be Abolitionists or Democrats;" to which he replied, musingly, "When that time comes, my mind is made up, for I believe the slavery question can never be successfully compromised." And when his mind was made up, after earnest deliberation, he rarely changed it, and became as firm as a rock. His convictions were exceedingly strong, and few influences could shake them. That quiet conversation in his buggy, in a retired road, with a brother lawyer, was a political baptism. He had taken his stand on one side of a great question which would rend in twain the whole country, and make a mighty conflagration, out of whose fires the truth should come victorious.

The Whig party was now politically dead, and the Republican party arose, composed of conscientious and independent-minded men from all the old organizations, not afraid to put principle before party, conservative and law-abiding, yet deeply aroused on the great issue of the day, and united against the further extension of slavery, — organizing with great enthusiasm for a first presidential campaign in 1856, under Frémont, "the Pathfinder," as their candidate They were defeated, and James Buchanan, the Democratic candidate, became President; but, accepting defeat as a lesson toward victory, they grew stronger and stronger every day, until at last they swept the country and secured to the principle "non-extension of slavery" complete representation in the national government.

Lincoln, who was in 1857 the Republican candidate for United States Senator from Illinois, while Douglas sought the votes of the Democracy, first entered the lists against his rival at Springfield, in a speech attacking that wily politician's position as to the Dred-Scott decision. He tried to force Douglas to a declaration of the logical consequence of his position, namely, that, while he upheld the decision as a wise interpretation of the rights of the slave-owners to hold slaves in the Territories, yet the people of a Territory, under "the great principle of Popular Sovereignty" (which was Douglas's chief stock in trade), could exclude

slavery from its limits even before it had formed a State constitution. "If we succeed in bringing him to this point," he wrote a friend, "he will say that slavery cannot actually exist in the Territories unless the people desire it, which will offend the South." If Douglas did not answer Lincoln's question he would jeopardize his election as Senator; if he did answer he would offend the South, for his doctrine of "squatter sovereignty" conflicted not only with the interests of slavery, but with his defence of the Dred-Scott decision, — a fact which Lincoln was not slow to point out. Douglas did answer, and the result was as Lincoln predicted.

The position taken by Lincoln himself in the debate was bold and clear. Said he, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. Either the opponents of slavery will avert the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the behalf that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, — old as well as new, North as well as South." When his friends objected that this kind of talk would defeat him for senatorship, he replied, "But it is *true* . . . I would rather be defeated with these expressions in my speech held up and discussed before the people than be victo-

rious without it." He was defeated: but the debates made his fame national and resulted in his being president; while the politic Douglas gained the senatorship and lost the greater prize.

In these famous debates between the leaders, Lincoln proved himself quite the equal of his antagonist, who was already famous as a trained and prompt debater. Lincoln canvassed the State. He made in one campaign as many as fifty speeches. It is impossible, within my narrow limits, to go into the details of those great debates. In them Lincoln rose above all technicalities and sophistries, and not only planted himself on eternal right, but showed marvellous political wisdom. The keynote of all his utterances was that "a house divided against itself could not stand." Yet he did not pass beyond the constitutional limit in his argument: he admitted the right of the South to a fugitive-slave law, and the right of a Territory to enact slavery for itself on becoming a State; he favored abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia only on the request of its inhabitants, and would forward the colonization of the negroes in Liberia if they wished it and their masters consented. He was a pronounced antislavery man, but not an Abolitionist, and took with the great mass of the Northerners a firm stand against the *extension* of slavery. It was this intuitive perception of the common-sense of the situation that made him

and kept him the remarkable representative of the Northern people that he was to the very end.

Lincoln gained so much fame from his contest with Douglas that he was, during the autumn of the following year, invited to speak in the Eastern States; and in the great hall of the Cooper Institute in New York, in October, 1859, he addressed a magnificent audience presided over by Bryant the poet. He had made elaborate preparation for this speech, which was a careful review of the slavery question from the foundation of the republic to that time, and a masterly analysis of the relative positions of political parties to it. The address made a deep impression. The speaker was simply introduced as a distinguished politician from the West. The speech was a surprise to those who were familiar with Western oratory. There was no attempt at rhetoric, but the address was pure logic from beginning to end, like an argument before the Supreme Court, and exceedingly forcible. The chief point made was the political necessity of excluding slavery from the Territories. The orator did not dwell on slavery as a crime, but as a wrong which had gradually been forced upon the nation, the remedy for which was not in violent denunciations. He did not abuse the South; he simply pleaded for harmony in the Republican ranks, and avoided giving offence to extreme partisans on

any side, contending that if slavery could be excluded from the Territories it would gradually become extinct, as both unprofitable and unjust. He would tolerate slavery within its present limits, and even return fugitive slaves to their owners, according to the laws, but would not extend the evil where it did not at present exist. As it was a wrong, it must not be perpetuated.

The moderation of this speech, coming from an Illinois politician, did much to draw attention to him as a possible future candidate for the presidency, to which, by this time he undoubtedly aspired. And why not? He was the leader of his party in Illinois, a great speech-maker, who had defeated Douglas himself in debate, a shrewd, cool, far-sighted man, looking to the future rather than the present; and political friends had already gathered about him as a strong political factor.

Mr. Lincoln after his great speech in New York returned to his home. He had a few years before given some political speeches in Boston and the adjacent towns, which were well received, but made no deep impression, — from no fault of his, but simply because he had not the right material to work upon, where culture was more in demand than vigor of intellect.

Indeed, one result of the election of Lincoln, and

of the war which followed, was to open the eyes of Eastern people to the intellect and intelligence of the West. Western lawyers and politicians might not have the culture of Sumner, the polished elocution of Everett, the urbanity of Van Buren, and the courtly manners of Winthrop, but they had brain power, a faculty for speech-making, and great political sagacity. And they were generally more in sympathy with the people, having mostly sprung from their ranks. Their hard and rugged intellects *told* on the floor of Congress, where every one is soon judged according to his merits, and not according to his clothes. And the East saw that thereafter political power would centre in the West, and dominate the whole country, — against which it was useless to complain or rebel, since, according to all political axioms, the majority will rule, and ought to rule. And the more the East saw of the leading men of the West, the more it respected their force of mind, their broad and comprehensive views, and their fitness for high place under the government.

It was not the people of the United States who called for the nomination of Lincoln, as in the case of General Jackson. He was not much known outside of Illinois except as a skilful debater and stump orator. He had filled no high office to bring him before the eyes of the nation. He was not a general

covered with military laurels, nor a Senator in Congress, nor governor of a large State, nor a cabinet officer. No man had thus far been nominated for President unless he was a military success, or was in the line of party promotion. Though a party leader in Illinois, Lincoln was simply a private citizen, with no antecedents which marked him out for such exalted position. But he was "available," — a man who could be trusted, moderate in his views, a Whig and yet committed to antislavery views, of great logical powers, and well informed on all the political issues of the day. He was not likely to be rash, or impulsive, or hasty, or to stand in the way of political aspirants. He was eminently a safe man in an approaching crisis, with a judicial intellect, and above all a man without enemies, whom few envied, and some laughed at for his grotesque humor and awkward manners. He was also modest and unpretending, and had the tact to veil his ambition. In his own State he was exceedingly popular. It was not strange, therefore, that the Illinois Republican State Convention nominated him as their presidential candidate, to be supported in the larger national convention about to assemble.

In May, 1860, the memorable National Republican Convention met in Chicago, in an immense building called the Wigwam, to select a candidate for the presidency. Among the prominent Republican leaders

were Seward, Chase, Cameron, Dayton, and Bates. The Eastern people supposed that Seward would receive the nomination, from his conceded ability, his political experience, his prominence as an antislavery Whig, and the prestige of office; but he had enemies, and an unconciliatory disposition. It soon became evident that he could not carry all the States. The contest was between Seward, Chase, and Lincoln; and when, on the third ballot, Lincoln received within a vote and a half of the majority, Ohio gave him four votes from Chase, and then delegation after delegation changed its vote for the victor, and amid great enthusiasm the nomination became unanimous.

The election followed, and Lincoln, the Republican, received one hundred and eighty electoral votes; Breckinridge, the Southern Democrat, seventy-two; Bell, of the Union ticket — the last fragment of the old Whig party — thirty-nine; and Douglas, of the Northern Democracy, but twelve. The rail-splitter became President of the United States, and Senator Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, Vice-President. It was a victory of ideas. It was the triumph of the North over the South, — of the aroused conscience and intelligence of the people against bigotry, arrogance, and wrong. Men and measures in that great contest paled before the grandeur of everlasting principles. It was not for Lincoln that bonfires were kindled and can-

nons roared and bells were rung and huzzas ascended to heaven, but for the great check given to the slave-power, which, since the formation of the Constitution, had dominated the nation. The Republicans did not gain a majority of the popular vote, as the combined opposing tickets cast 930,170 votes more than they; but their vote was much larger than that for any other ticket, and gave them a handsome majority in the electoral college.

Between the election in November, 1860, and the following March, when Lincoln took the reins of government, several of the Southern States had already seceded from the Union and had organized a government at Montgomery. Making the excuse of the election of a "sectional and minority president," they had put into effect the action for which their leaders had been during months past traitorously preparing. They had seized nearly all the Federal forts, arsenals, dock-yards, custom-houses, and post-offices within their limits, while a large number of the officers of the United States army and navy had resigned, and entered into their service, on the principle that the authority of their States was paramount to the Federal power.

Amid all these preparations for war on the part of the seceding States, and the seizure of Federal property, Buchanan was irresolute and perplexed. He was doubtless patriotic and honest, but he did not

know what to do. The state of things was much more serious than when South Carolina threatened to secede in the time of General Jackson. The want of firmness and decision on the part of the President has been severely criticised, but it seems to me to have been not without excuse in the perplexing conditions of the time, while it was certainly fortunate that he did not precipitate the crisis by sending troops to reinforce Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, which was invested and threatened by South Carolina troops. The contest was inevitable anyway, and the management of the war was better in the hands of Lincoln than it could have been in those of Buchanan, with traitors in his cabinet, or even after they had left and a new and loyal cabinet was summoned, but with an undecided man at the head. There was needed a new and stronger government when hostilities should actually break out.

On the 4th of March, 1861, the inauguration of Lincoln took place, and well do I remember the ceremony. The day was warm and beautiful, and nature smiled in mockery of the bloody tragedy which was so soon to follow. I mingled with the crowd at the eastern portico of the Capitol, and was so fortunate as to hear and see all that took place, — the high officials who surrounded the President, his own sad and pensive face, his awkward but not undignified person arrayed

in a faultless suit of black, the long address he made, the oath of office administered by Chief Justice Taney, and the dispersion of the civil and military functionaries to their homes. It was not a great pageant, but was an impressive gathering. Society, in which the Southern element predominated, sneered at the tall ruler who had learned so few of its graces and insincerities, and took but little note of the thunder-clouds in the political atmosphere, — the distant rumblings which heralded the approaching storm so soon to break with satanic force.

The inaugural address was not only an earnest appeal for peace, but a calm and steadfast announcement of the law-abiding policy of the government, and a putting of the responsibility for any bloodshed upon those who should resist the law. Two brief paragraphs contain the whole: —

"The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no use of force among the people anywhere.

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors."

This was the original chart of the course which the President followed, and his final justification when by

use of "the power confided to him" he had accomplished the complete restoration of the authority of the Federal Union over all the vast territory which the seceded States had seized and so desperately tried to control.

Lincoln was judicious and fortunate in his cabinet. Seward, the ablest and most experienced statesman of the day, accepted the office of Secretary of State; Salmon P. Chase, who had been governor of Ohio, and United States Senator, was made Secretary of the Treasury; Gideon Welles, of great executive ability and untiring energy, became Secretary of the Navy; Simon Cameron, an influential politician of Pennsylvania, held the post of Secretary of War for a time, when he was succeeded by Edwin M. Stanton, a man of immense capacity for work; Montgomery Blair, a noted antislavery leader, was made Postmaster-General; Caleb B. Smith became Secretary of the Interior; and Edward Bates, of Missouri, Attorney-General. Every one of these cabinet ministers was a strong man, and was found to be greater than he had seemed.

Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, an old-time Democrat, was elected President of the Southern Confederacy, and Alexander H. Stevens, a prominent Whig of Georgia, Vice-President. Davis was born in Kentucky in 1808, and was a graduate of West Point. He was a Congressman on the outbreak of the Mexican War, re-

signed his seat, entered the army, and distinguished himself, rising to the rank of colonel. He was Secretary of War in President Pierce's cabinet, and Senator from Mississippi on the accession of President Buchanan, — a position which he held until the secession of his State. He thus had had considerable military and political experience. He was a man of great ability, but was proud, reserved, and cold, "a Democrat by party name, an autocrat in feeling and sentiment, — a type of the highest Southern culture, and exclusive Southern caste." To his friends — and they were many, in spite of his reserve — there was a peculiar charm in his social intercourse; he was beloved in his family, and his private life was irreproachable. He selected an able cabinet, among whom were Walker of Alabama, Toombs of Georgia, and Benjamin of Louisiana. The Provisional Congress authorized a regular army of ten thousand men, one hundred thousand volunteers, and a loan of fifteen millions of dollars.

But actual hostilities had not as yet commenced. The Confederates, during the close of Buchanan's administration, were not without hopes of a peaceful settlement and recognition of secession, and several conferences had taken place, — one overture being made even to the new administration, but of course in vain.

The spark which kindled the conflagration — but little more than a month after Lincoln's inauguration,

April 12, 1861 — was the firing on Fort Sumter, and its surrender to the South Carolinians. This aroused both the indignation and the military enthusiasm of the North, which in a single day was, as by a lightning flash, fused in a white heat of patriotism and a desire to avenge the dishonored flag. For the time all party lines disappeared, and the whole population were united and solid in defence of the Union. Both sides now prepared to fight in good earnest. The sword was drawn, the scabbard thrown away. Both sides were confident of victory. The Southern leaders were under the delusion that the Yankees would not fight, and that they cared more for dollars than for their country. Moreover, the Southern States had long been training their young men in the military schools, and had for months been collecting materials of war. As cotton was an acknowledged "king," the planters calculated on the support of England, which could not do without their bales. Lastly, they knew that the North had been divided against itself, and that the Democratic politicians sympathized with them in reference to slavery. The Federal leaders, on the other hand, relied on the force of numbers, of wealth, and national prestige. Very few supposed that the contest would be protracted. Seward thought that it would not last over three months. Nor did the South think of con-

quering the North, but supposed it could secure its own independence. It certainly was resolved on making a desperate fight to defend its peculiar institution. As it was generally thought in England that this attempt would succeed, as England had no special love for the Union, and as the Union, and not opposition to slavery, was the rallying cry of the North, England gave to the South its moral support.

Lincoln assumed his burden with great modesty, but with a steady firmness and determination, and surprised his cabinet by his force of will. Nicolay and Hay relate an anecdote of great significance. Seward, who occupied the first place in the cabinet, which he deserved on account of his experience and abilities, was not altogether pleased with the slow progress of things, and wrote to Lincoln an extraordinary letter in less than a month after his inauguration, suggesting more active operations, with specific memoranda of a proposed policy. "Whatever policy we adopt," said he, "there must be an energetic prosecution of it. For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly. Either the President must do it himself, or devolve it on some member of his cabinet. It is not my especial province; but I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility." In brief, it was an intimation, "If you feel not equal to the emergency, perhaps you can find a man not a thousand miles away who is equal to it."

Lincoln, in his reply, showed transcendent tact. Although an inexperienced local politician, suddenly placed at the head of a great nation, in a tremendous crisis, and surrounded in his cabinet and in Congress by men of acknowledged expert ability in statecraft, he had his own ideas, but he needed the counsel and help of these men as well. He could not afford to part with the services of a man like Seward, nor would he offend him by any assumption of dignity or resentment at his unasked advice. He good-naturedly replied, in substance: "The policy laid down in my inaugural met your distinct approval, and it has thus far been exactly followed. As to attending to its prosecution, if this must be done, I must do it, and I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all the cabinet."

After this, no member of the cabinet dared to attempt to usurp any authority which belonged to the elected commander-in-chief of the army and navy,— unless it were Chase, at a later time. As the head of the government in whom supreme Federal power was invested in time of war, Lincoln was willing and eager to consult his cabinet, but reserved his decisions and assumed all responsibilities. He probably made mistakes, but who could have done better on the whole? The choice of the nation was justified by results.

It is not my object in this paper to attempt to com-

press the political and military history of the United States during the memorable administration of Mr. Lincoln. If one wishes to know the details he must go to the ten octavo biographical volumes of Lincoln's private secretaries, to the huge and voluminous quarto reports of the government, to the multifarious books on the war and its actors. I can only glance at salient points, and even here I must confine myself to those movements which are intimately connected with the agency and influence of Lincoln himself. It is his life, and not a history of the war, that it is my business to present. Nor has the time come for an impartial and luminous account of the greatest event of modern times. The jealousy and dissensions of generals, the prejudices of the people both North and South, the uncertainty and inconsistency of much of the material published, and the conceit of politicians, alike prevent a history which will be satisfactory, no matter how gifted and learned may be the historian. When all the actors of that famous tragedy, both great and small, have passed away, new light will appear, and poetry will add her charms to what is now too hideous a reality, glorious as were the achievements of heroes and statesmen.

After the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861, won by the Confederate General Beauregard over General McDowell, against all expectation, to the dismay and

indignation of the whole North, — the result of overconfidence on the part of the Union troops, and a wretchedly mismanaged affair, — the attention of the Federal government was mainly directed to the defence of Washington, which might have fallen into the hands of the enemy had the victors been confident and quick enough to pursue the advantage they had gained; for nothing could exceed the panic at the capital after the disastrous defeat of McDowell. The demoralization of the Union forces was awful. Happily, the condition of the Confederate troops was not much better.

But the country rallied after the crisis had passed. Lincoln issued his proclamation for five hundred thousand additional men. Congress authorized as large a loan as was needed. The governors of the various States raised regiment after regiment, and sent them to Washington, as the way through Maryland, at first obstructed by local secessionists, was now clear, General Butler having intrenched himself at Baltimore. Most fortunately the governor of Maryland was a Union man, and with the aid of the Northern forces had repressed the rebellious tendency in Maryland, which State afterward remained permanently in the Union, and offered no further resistance to the passage of Federal troops. Arlington Heights in Virginia, opposite Washington, had already been fortified by

General Scott; but additional defences were made, and the capital was out of danger.

With the rapid concentration of troops at Washington, the government again assumed the offensive. General George B. McClellan, having distinguished himself in West Virginia, was called to Washington, at the recommendation of the best military authorities, and intrusted with the command of the Army of the Potomac; and soon after, on the retirement of General Scott, now aged and infirm, and unable to mount a horse, McClellan took his place as commander of all the forces of the United States.

At the beginning of the rebellion McClellan was simply a captain, but was regarded as one of the most able and accomplished officers of the army. His promotion was rapid beyond precedent; but his head was turned by his elevation, and he became arrogant and opinionated, and before long even insulted the President, and assumed the airs of a national liberator on whose shoulders was laid the burden of the war. He consequently estranged Congress, offended Scott, became distrusted by the President, and called out the jealousies of the other generals. But he was popular with the army and his subordinates, and if he offended his superiors his soldiers were devoted to him, and looked upon him as a second Napoleon.

The best thing which can be said of this general is

that he was a great organizer, and admirably disciplined for their future encounters the raw troops which were placed under his command. And he was too prudent to risk the lives of his men until his preparations were made, although constantly urged to attempt, if not impossibilities, at least what was exceedingly hazardous.

It was expected by the President, the Secretary of War and Congress, that he would hasten his preparations, and advance upon the enemy, as he had over one hundred thousand men; and he made grand promises and gave assurances that he would march speedily upon Richmond. But he did not march. Delay succeeded delay, under various pretences, to the disappointment of the country, and the indignation of the responsible government. It was not till April, 1862, after five months of inaction, that he was ready to move upon Richmond, and then not according to pre-arranged plans, but by a longer route, by the way of Fortress Monroe, up the Peninsula between the York and James rivers, and not directly across Virginia by Manassas Junction, which had been evacuated in view of his superior forces, — the largest army theretofore seen on this continent.

It is not for me, utterly ignorant of military matters, to make any criticism of the plan of operations, in which the President and McClellan were at issue, or

to censure the general in command for the long delay, against the expostulations of the Executive and of Congress. He maintained that his army was not sufficiently drilled, or large enough for an immediate advance, that the Confederate forces were greater than his own, and were posted in impregnable positions. He was always calling for reinforcements, until his army comprised over two hundred thousand men, and when at last imperatively commanded to move, somewhither, — at any rate to move, — he left Washington not sufficiently defended, which necessitated the withdrawal of McDowell's corps from him to secure the safety of the capital. Without enumerating or describing the terrible battles on the Peninsula, and the "change of base," which practically was a retreat, and virtually the confession of failure, it may be said in defence or palliation of McClellan that it afterwards took Grant, with still greater forces, and when the Confederates were weakened and demoralized, a year to do what McClellan was expected to do in three months.

The war had now been going on for more than a year, without any decisive results so far as the Army of the Potomac was concerned, but on the contrary with great disasters and bitter humiliations. The most prodigious efforts had been made by the Union troops without success, and thus far the Confederates

had the best of it, and were filled with triumph. As yet no Union generals could be compared with Lee, or Johnston, or Longstreet, or Stonewall Jackson, while the men under their command were quite equal to the Northern soldiers in bravery and discipline.

The times were dark and gloomy at the North, and especially so to the President, as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, after all the energies he put forth in the general direction of affairs. He was maligned and misrepresented and ridiculed; yet he opened not his mouth, and kept his soul in patience, — magnanimous, forbearing, and modest. In his manners and conduct, though intrusted with greater powers than any American before him had ever exercised, he showed no haughtiness, no resentments, no disdain, but was accessible to everybody who had any claim on his time, and was as simple and courteous as he had been in a private station. But what anxieties, what silent grief, what a burden had he to bear! And here was his greatness, which endeared him to the American heart, — that he usurped no authority, offended no one, and claimed nothing, when most men, armed as he was with almost unlimited authority, would have been reserved, arrogant, and dictatorial. He did not even assume the cold dignity which Washington felt it necessary to put on, but shook hands, told stories, and uttered jokes as if he were without office on the

prairies of Illinois; yet all the while resolute in purpose and invincible in spirit, — an impersonation of logical intellect before which everybody succumbed, as firm, when he saw his way clear, as Bismarck himself.

His tact in managing men showed his native shrewdness and kindliness, as well as the value of all his early training in the arts of the politician. Always ready to listen, and to give men free chance to relieve their minds in talk, he never directly antagonized their opinions, but, deftly embodying an argument in an apt joke or story, would manage to switch them off from their track to his own without their exactly perceiving the process. His innate courtesy often made him seem uncertain of his ground, but he probably had his own way quite as frequently as Andrew Jackson, and without that irascible old fighter's friction.

But darker days were yet to come, and more perplexing duties had yet to be discharged. The President was obliged to retire McClellan from his command when, in August, 1862, that general's procrastination could no longer be endured. McClellan had made no fatal blunders, was endeared to his men, and when it was obvious that he could not take Richmond, although within four miles of it at one time, he had made a successful and masterly retreat to Harrison's Landing; yet the campaign against the Confederate capital had been a failure, as many believed, by reason of unneces-

sary delays on the part of the commander, and the President had to take the responsibility of sustaining or removing him. He chose the latter.

What general would Lincoln select to succeed McClellan? He chose General John Pope, but not with the powers which had been conferred on McClellan. Pope had been graduated at West Point in 1842, had served with distinction in the Mexican War, and had also done good service in the West. But it was his misfortune at this time to lose the second battle of Bull Run, or Manassas, when there was no necessity of fighting. He himself attributed his disaster to the inaction and disobedience of General Porter, who was cashiered for it, — a verdict which was reversed by a careful military inquiry after the war. Pope's defeat was followed, although against the advice of the cabinet, by the restoration of McClellan, since Washington was again in danger. After he had put the capital in safety, McClellan advanced slowly against Lee, who had crossed the Potomac into Maryland with designs on Pennsylvania. He made his usual complaint of inadequate forces, and exaggerated the forces of the enemy. He won, however, the battle of Antietam, — for, although the Confederates afterwards claimed that it was a drawn battle, they immediately retired, — but even then failed to pursue his advantage, and allowed Lee to recross the Potomac and escape, to the deep dis-

gust of everybody and the grief of Lincoln. Encouraged by McClellan's continued inaction, Lee sent his cavalry under Stuart, who with two thousand men encircled the Federal army, and made a raid into Pennsylvania, gathering supplies, and retired again into Virginia, unhindered and unharmed. The President now deprived McClellan again of his command, and that general's military career ended. He retired to private life, emerging again only as an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for the presidency against Lincoln in 1864.

It was a difficult matter for Lincoln to decide upon a new general to command the Army of the Potomac. He made choice of Ambrose E. Burnside, the next in rank, — a man of pleasing address and a gallant soldier, but not of sufficient abilities for the task imposed upon him. The result was the greatest military blunder of the whole war. With the idea of advancing directly upon Richmond through Fredericksburg, Burnside made the sad error of attacking equal forces strongly intrenched on the Fredericksburg Heights, while he advanced from the valley of the Rappahannock below, crossing the river under a plunging fire, and attacking the enemy on the hill. It was a dismal slaughter, but Burnside magnanimously took the whole blame upon himself, and was not disgraced, although removed from his command. He did good service afterwards as a corps commander.

It was soon after Burnside's unfortunate failure at Fredericksburg, perhaps the gloomiest period of the war, when military reverses saddened the whole North, and dissensions in the cabinet itself added to the embarrassments of the President, that Lincoln performed the most momentous act of his life, and probably the most important act of the whole war, in his final proclamation emancipating the slaves, and utilizing them in the Union service, as a military necessity.

Ever since the beginning of hostilities had this act been urged upon the President by the antislavery men of the North, — a body growing more intense and larger in numbers as the war advanced. But Lincoln remained steady to his original purpose of *saving the Union*, — whether with or without slavery. Naturally and always opposed to slavery, he did not believe that he had any right to indulge his private feeling in violation of the Constitutional limitations of his civil power, unless, as he said, "measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation."

Thus when in 1861 Frémont in Missouri proclaimed emancipation to the slaves of persistent rebels, although this was hailed with delight by vast numbers at the North, the President countermanded it as not yet an indispensable necessity. In March, 1862, he approved

Acts of Congress legalizing General B. F. Butler's shrewd device of declaring all slaves of rebels in arms as "contraband of war," and thus, when they came within the army lines, to be freed and used by the Northern armies. In March, May, and July, 1862, he made earnest appeals to the Border States to favor compensated emancipation, because he foresaw that military emancipation would become necessary before long. When Lee was in Maryland and Pennsylvania, he felt that the time had arrived, and awaited only some marked military success, so that the measure should seem a mightier blow to the rebels and not a cry for help. And this was a necessary condition, for, while hundreds of thousands of Democrats had joined the armies and had become Republicans for the war, — in fact, all the best generals and a large proportion of the soldiers of the North had been Democrats before the flag was fired on, — yet the Democratic politicians of the proslavery type were still alive and active throughout the North, doing all they could to discredit the national cause, and hinder the government; and Lincoln intuitively knew that this act must commend itself to the great mass of the Northern people, or it would be a colossal blunder.

Therefore, when Lee had been driven back, on September 22, 1862, the President issued a preliminary proclamation, stating that he should again recommend

Congress to favor an Act tendering pecuniary aid to slaveholders in States not in rebellion, who would adopt immediate or gradual abolishment of slavery within their limits; but that on the first day of January, 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be thenceforward and forever free." And accordingly, — in spite of Burnside's dreadful disaster before Fredericksburg on December 13, unfavorable results in the fall elections throughout the North, much criticism of his course in the newly assembled Congress, and the unpopular necessity of more men and more money to be drawn from the loyal States, — on January 1, 1863, the courageous leader sent forth his final and peremptory Decree of Emancipation. He issued it, "by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion."

Of course such an edict would have no immediate force in the remoter States controlled by the Confederate government, nor at the time did it produce any remarkable sensation except to arouse bitter animadversion at the North and renewed desperation of effort at the South; but it immediately began to reduce the

workers on intrenchments and fortifications along the Confederate front and to increase those of the Federal forces, while soon also providing actual troops for the Union armies; and, since it was subsequently indorsed by all the States, through an amendment to the Constitution by which slavery was forever prohibited in the States and Territories of the United States, and in view of its immense consequences, the Emancipation Proclamation of Lincoln must be regarded as perhaps the culminating event in the war. It was his own act; and he accepted all the responsibilities. The abolition of slavery is therefore forever identified with the administration of Lincoln.

In the early part of 1863 Lincoln relieved Burnside of his command, and appointed General Joseph Hooker to succeed him. This officer had distinguished himself as a brilliant tactician; he was known as "fighting Joe;" but he was rash. He made a bold and successful march, crossed the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers and advanced upon the enemy, but early in May, 1863, was defeated at Chancellorsville, in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. The Confederates were now exceedingly elated; and Lee, with a largely increased army of ninety thousand splendid fighting men, resolved on invading Pennsylvania in force. Evading Hooker, he passed through the Shenandoah Valley, and about the middle of June was in

Pennsylvania before the Union forces could be gathered to oppose him. He took York and Carlisle and threatened Harrisburg. The invasion filled the North with dismay. Hooker, feeling his incompetency, and on bad terms with Halleck, the general-in-chief, asked to be relieved, and his request was at once granted.

General George C. Meade was appointed his successor on June 28. Striking due north with all speed, ably supported by a remarkable group of corps commanders and the veteran Army of the Potomac handsomely reinforced and keenly eager to fight, Meade brought Lee to bay near the village of Gettysburg, and after three days of terrific fighting, in which the losses of the two armies aggregated over forty-five thousand men, on the 3d of July he defeated Lee's army and turned it rapidly southward. This was the most decisive battle of the war, and the most bloody, finally lost by Lee through his making the same mistake that Burnside did at Fredericksburg, in attacking equal forces intrenched on a hill. Nothing was left to Lee but retreat across the Potomac, and Meade — an able but not a great captain — made the mistake that McClellan had made at Antietam in not following up his advantage, but allowing Lee to escape into Virginia.

To cap the climax of Union success, on the 4th of July General Ulysses S. Grant, who had been operating against Vicksburg on the Mississippi during four

months, captured that city, with thirty-two thousand prisoners, and a few days later Port Hudson with its garrison fell into his hands. The signal combination of victories filled the North with enthusiasm and the President with profoundest gratitude. It is true, Meade's failure to follow and capture Lee was a bitter disappointment to Lincoln. The Confederate commander might have been compelled to surrender to a flushed and conquering army a third larger than his own, had Meade pursued and attacked him, and the war might perhaps virtually have ended. Yet Lee's army was by no means routed, and was in dangerous mood, while Meade's losses had been really larger than his; so that the Federal general's caution does not lack military defenders. Nevertheless, he evidently was not the man that had been sought for.

More than two years had now elapsed since the Army of the Potomac had been organized by McClellan, and yet it was no nearer the end which the President, the war minister, the cabinet, and the generals had in view, — the capture of Richmond. Thus far, more than one hundred thousand men had been lost in the contest which the politicians had supposed was to be so brief. Not a single general had arisen at the East equal to the occasion. Only a few of the generals had seen important military service before the war, and not one had evinced remarkable abilities, although

many had distinguished themselves for bravery and capacity to manage well an army corps. Each army commander had failed when great responsibilities had been imposed upon him. Not one came up to popular expectation. The great soldier must be "born" as well as "made."

It must be observed that up to this time, in the autumn of 1863, the President had not only superintended the Army of the Potomac, but had borne the chief burden of the government and the war at large. Cabinet meetings, reports of generals, quarrels of generals, dissensions of political leaders, impertinence of editors, the premature pressure to emancipate slaves, Western campaigns, the affairs of the navy, and a thousand other things pressed upon his attention. It was his custom to follow the movements of every army with the map before him, and to be perfectly familiar with all the general, and many of the detailed, problems in every part of the vast field of the war. No man was ever more overworked. It may be a question how far he was wise in himself attending to so many details, and in giving directions to generals in high command, and sometimes against the advice of men more experienced in military matters. That is not for me to settle. He seemed to bear the government and all the armies on head and heart, as if the responsibility for everything was imposed upon

him. What had been the history? In the East, two years clouded by disasters, mistakes, and national disappointments, with at last a breaking of the day, — and that, in the West.

Was ever a man more severely tried! And yet, in view of fatal errors on the part of generals, the disobedience of orders, and the unfriendly detractions of Chase, — his able, but self-important Secretary of the Treasury, — not a word of reproach had fallen from him; he was still gentle, conciliatory, patient, forgiving on all occasions, and marvellously reticent and self-sustained. His transcendent moral qualities stood out before the world unquestioned, whatever criticisms may be made as to the wisdom of all his acts.

But a brighter day was at hand. The disasters of the East — for Gettysburg was but the retrieving of a desperate situation — were compensated by great success in the West. Fort Donelson and Columbus in 1862, Vicksburg and Port Hudson in 1863, had been great achievements. The Mississippi was cleared of hostile forts upon its banks, and was opened to its mouth. New Orleans was occupied by Union troops. The finances were in good condition, for Chase had managed that great problem with brilliant effect. The national credit was restored. The navy had done wonders, and the southern coast was effectually blockaded. A war with England had been averted by

the tact of Lincoln rather than the diplomacy of Seward.

Lincoln cordially sustained in his messages to Congress the financial schemes of the Secretary of the Treasury, and while he carefully watched, he did not interfere with, the orders of the Secretary of the Navy. To Farragut, Foote, and Porter was great glory due for opening the Mississippi, as much as to Grant and Sherman for cutting the Confederate States in twain. Too much praise cannot be given to Chase for the restoration of the national credit, and Lincoln bore patiently his adverse criticism in view of his transcendent services.

At this stage of public affairs, in the latter part of 1863, General Grant was called from the West to take command of the Army of the Potomac. His great military abilities were known to the whole nation. Although a graduate of West Point, who had, when young, done good service under General Scott, his mature life had been a failure; and when the war broke out he was engaged in the tanning business at Galena, Illinois, at a salary of $800. He offered his services to the governor of Illinois, and was made a colonel of volunteers. Shortly after entering active service he was made brigadier-general, and his ability as a commander was soon apparent. He gradually arose to the command of the military district of Southeast Mis-

souri; then to the command of the great military rendezvous and depot at Cairo. Then followed his expedition, assisted by Commodore Foote, against Fort Henry on the Tennessee River, in the early part of 1862, with no encouragement from Halleck, the commanding-general at St. Louis. The capture of Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River came next, to the amazement and chagrin of the Confederate generals; for which he was made a major-general of volunteers. This was a great service, which resulted in the surrender of Generals Buckner and Johnson with 15,000 Confederate soldiers, 20,000 stands of arms, 48 pieces of artillery, and 3,000 horses. But this great success was nothing to the siege and capture of Vicksburg, July 4, 1863, which opened the Mississippi and divided the Confederacy, to say nothing of the surrender of nearly 30,000 men, 172 cannon, and 60,000 muskets. Then followed the great battle of Chattanooga, which shed glory on Thomas, Sherman, Burnside, and Hooker, and raised still higher the military fame of Grant, who had planned and directed it. No general in the war had approached him in success and ability. The eyes of the nation were now upon him. Congress revived for him the grade of lieutenant-general, and the conqueror of Vicksburg and Chattanooga received the honor on March 3, 1864, the first on whom the full rank had been conferred since

Washington. The lieutenant-generalcy conferred on Winfield Scott after the Mexican War was a special brevet title of honor, that rank not existing in our army.

On the 8th of March the President met the successful and fortunate general for the first time, and was delighted with his quiet modesty; on the next day he gave him command of all the armies of the United States. Grant was given to understand that the work assigned to him personally was the capture of Richmond. But he was left to follow out his own plans, and march to the Confederate capital by any route he saw fit. Henceforth the President, feeling full confidence, ceased to concern himself with the plans of the general commanding the Army of the Potomac. He did not even ask to know them. All he and the Secretary of War could do was to forward the plans of the Lieutenant-General, and provide all the troops he wanted. Lincoln's anxieties of course remained, and he watched eagerly for news, and was seen often at the war department till late at night, waiting to learn what Grant was doing; but Grant was left with the whole military responsibility because he was evidently competent for it; the relief to Lincoln must have been immense. The history of the war, from this time, belongs to the life of Grant rather than of Lincoln. Suggestions to that successful soldier from civilians

now were like those of the Dutch Deputies when they undertook to lecture the great Marlborough on the art of war. To bring the war to a speedy close required the brain and the will and the energy of a military genius, and the rapid and concentrated efforts of veteran soldiers, disciplined by experience, and inured to the toils and dangers of war.

The only great obstacle was the difficulty of enlisting men in what was now more than ever to be dangerous work. When Grant began his march to Richmond probably half a million of soldiers had perished on each side, and a national debt had been contracted of over two thousand millions of dollars. In spite of patriotic calls, in spite of bounties, it became necessary to draft men into the service, — a compulsory act of power to be justified only by the exigencies of the country. In no other way could the requisite number of troops be secured. Multitudes of the survivors have been subsequently rewarded, at least partially, by pensions. The pension list, at the close of Harrison's administration in 1892, amounted to a sum greater than Germany annually expends on its gigantic army. So far as the pensioners are genuinely disabled veterans, the people make no complaint, appreciating the sacrifices which the soldiers were compelled to make in the dreadful contest. But so vast a fund for distribution attracted the inevitable horde of small

lawyers and pension agents, who swelled the lists with multitudes of sham veterans and able-bodied "cripples," until many eminent ex-soldiers cried out for a purgation of that which should be a list of honor.

Nor is it disloyal or unpatriotic to shed a tear for the brave but misguided men whom the Southern leaders led to destruction without any such recompense for their wounds and hardships, — for the loss of their property, loss of military prestige, loss of political power, loss of everything but honor. At first we called them Rebels, and no penalties were deemed too severe for them to suffer; but later we called them Confederates, waging war for a cause which they honestly deemed sacred, and for which they cheerfully offered up their lives, — a monstrous delusion indeed, but one for which we ceased to curse them, and soon learned to forgive, after their cause was lost. Resentment gave place to pity, and they became like erring brothers, whom it was our duty to forgive, and in many respects our impulse to admire, — not for their cause, but for their devotion to it. All this was foreseen and foretold by Edward Everett during the war, yet there were but few who agreed with him.

I can devote but little space to the military movements of General Grant in Virginia until Richmond

surrendered and the rebellion collapsed. There was among the Southerners no contempt of this leader, fresh from the laurels of Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga; and the Confederates put forth almost superhuman efforts to defend their capital against the scientific strategy of the most successful general of the war, supported as he was by almost unlimited forces, and the unreserved confidence of his government.

The new general-in-chief established his headquarters at Culpepper Court House near the end of March, 1864. His plan of operations was simple, — to advance against Lee, before proceeding to Richmond, and defeat his army if possible. Richmond, even if taken, would be comparatively valueless unless Lee were previously defeated. Grant's forces were about one hundred and fifty thousand men, and Lee's little more than half that number, but the latter were intrenched in strong positions on the interior line. It was Grant's plan to fight whenever an opportunity was presented, — since he could afford to lose two men to one of the enemy, and was thus sure to beat in the long run; as a chess-player, having a superiority of pieces, freely exchanges as he gets opportunity. There was nothing particularly brilliant in this policy adopted by Grant, except the great fact that he chose the course most likely to succeed, whatever might be

his losses. Lee at first was also ready to fight, but after the dreadful slaughter on both sides in the battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, and Cold Harbor, he apparently changed his plans. One third of his forces had melted away; he saw that he could not afford to take risks, and retreated behind his defences. Grant, too, had changed his operations, at first directed against Richmond on the northwest; and, since he found every hill and wood and morass strongly fortified, he concluded to march on Lee's flank to the James River, and attack Richmond from the south, after reducing Petersburg, and destroying the southern railroads by which the Confederates received most of their supplies.

The Federal commander had all the men he wanted. A large force was under Butler near Petersburg, and Sheridan had driven out the enemy from the Valley of the Shenandoah with his magnificent cavalry. Lee was now cooped up between Fredericksburg and Richmond. He was too great a general to lead his army into either of these strongholds, where they might be taken as Pemberton's army was at Vicksburg. He wisely kept the field, although he would not fight except behind his intrenchments, when he was absolutely forced by the aggressive foe.

Henceforth, from June, 1864, to the close of the war, the operations of Grant resembled a siege rather

than a series of battles. He had lost over fifty thousand men thus far in his march, and he, too, now became economical of his soldiers' blood. He complained not, but doggedly carried out his plans without consulting the government at Washington, or his own generals. His work was hard and discouraging. He had to fight his way, step by step, against strong intrenchments, — the only thing to do, but he had the will and patience to do it. He had ordered an attack on Petersburg, which must be reduced before he could advance to Richmond; but the attack had failed, and he now sat down to a regular siege of that strong and important position. The siege lasted ten months, when Lee was driven within his inner line of defences, and, seeing that all was lost, on April 2, 1865, evacuated his position, and began his retreat to the west, hoping to reach Lynchburg, and after that effect a junction with Johnston coming up from the south. But his retreat was cut off near Appomattox, and being entirely surrounded he had nothing to do but surrender to Grant with his entire army, April 9. With his surrender, Richmond, of course, fell, and the war was virtually closed.

Out of the 2,200,000 men who had enlisted on the Union side, 110,000 were killed or mortally wounded, and 250,000 died from other causes. The expense of the war was $3,250,000,000. The losses of the Con-

federates were about three quarters as much. Of the millions who had enlisted on both sides, nearly a million of men perished, and over five thousand millions of dollars were expended, probably a quarter of the whole capital of the country at that time. So great were the sacrifices made to preserve the Union, — at the cost of more blood and treasure than have been spent in any other war in modern times.

I am compelled to omit notices of military movements in other parts of the Union, especially in the West, where some of the most gallant actions of the war took place, — the brilliant strategy of Rosecrans, the signal achievements of Thomas, Sherman's march to the sea, Sheridan's raids, the naval exploits of Farragut, Porter, and Foote, and other acts of heroism, as not bearing directly on the life of Lincoln. Of course he felt the intensest interest in all the military operations, and bore an unceasing burden of study and of anxiety, which of itself was a great strain on all his powers. If anything had gone wrong which he could remedy, his voice and his hand would have been heard and seen. But toward the last other things demanded his personal attention, and these were of great importance. There never had been a time since his inauguration when he was free from embarrassments, and when his burdens had not been oppressive.

Among other things, the misunderstanding between

him and Secretary Chase was anything but pleasant. Chase had proved himself the ablest finance minister that this country had produced after Alexander Hamilton. He was a man of remarkable dignity, integrity, and patriotism. He was not vain, but he was conscious both of his services and his abilities. And he was always inclined to underrate Lincoln, whom he misunderstood. He also had presidential aspirations. After three years' successful service he did not like to have his suggestions disregarded, and was impatient under any interference with his appointments. To say the least, his relations with the President were strained. Annoyed and vexed with some appointments of importance, he sent in his resignation, accompanied with a petulant letter. Lincoln, on its receipt, drove to the Secretary's house, handed back to him his letter, and persuaded him to reconsider his resignation. But it is difficult to mend a broken jar. The same trouble soon again occurred in reference to the appointment in New York of an assistant-treasurer by Mr. Chase, which the President, having no confidence in the appointee, could not accept; on which the Secretary again resigned, and Lincoln at once accepted his resignation, with these words: "Of all I have said in commendation of your ability and fidelity, I have nothing to unsay; and yet you and I have reached a point of mutual embarrassment in our official relations, which it seems can-

not be overcome or longer sustained consistently with the public service."

Mr. Chase, however, did not long remain unemployed. On the death of Chief Justice Taney in October, 1864, Mr. Lincoln appointed him to the head of the Supreme Court, — showing how little he cherished resentment, and how desirous he was to select the best men for all responsible positions, whether he personally liked them or not. Even when an able man had failed in one place, Lincoln generally found use for his services in another, — witness the gallant exploits of Burnside, Hooker, and Meade, after they had retired from the head of the Army of the Potomac. As a successor to Mr. Chase in the Treasury, the President, to the amazement of the country, selected Governor Tod of Ohio, who wisely declined the office. The next choice fell on Senator Wm. Pitt Fessenden, who reluctantly assumed an office which entailed such heavy responsibilities and hard work, but who made in it a fine record for efficiency. It was no slight thing to be obliged to raise one hundred millions of dollars every month for the expense of the war.

While General Grant lay apparently idle in his trenches before Petersburg the presidential election of 1864 took place, and in spite of the unpopular draft of five hundred thousand men in July, and a summer and autumn of severe fighting both East and West, Mr.

Lincoln was elected. There had been active and even acrimonious opposition, but who could compete with him? At this time his extraordinary fitness for the highest office in the gift of the nation was generally acknowledged, and the early prejudices against him had mostly passed away. He neither sought nor declined the re-election.

His second inaugural address has become historical for its lofty sentiments and political wisdom. It was universally admired, and his memorable words sunk into every true American heart. Said he: —

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, — as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" And, as showing his earnest conscientiousness, these familiar words: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans; to do all which may achieve and

cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." The eloquence of this is surpassed only by his own short speech at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863, which threw into the shade the rhetoric of the greatest orator of his time, and stands — unstudied as it was — probably the most complete and effective utterance known in this century.

That immortal inaugural address in March, 1865, — so simple and yet so eloquent, expresses two things in Mr. Lincoln's character to be especially noted: first, the tenderness and compassion, blended with stern energy and iron firmness of will, which shrank from bloodshed and violence, yet counted any sacrifice of blood and treasure as of little account in comparison with the transcendent blessing of national union and liberty; and, secondly, the change which it would appear gradually took place in his mind in reference to Divine supervision in the affairs of men and nations.

I need not dwell on the first, since nothing is more unquestionable than his abhorrence of all unnecessary bloodshed, or of anything like vengeance, or punishment of enemies, whether personal or political. His leniency and forgiveness were so great as to be denounced by some of his best friends, and by all political fanatics. And this leniency and forgiveness were the more remarkable since he was not demonstrative

in his affections and friendships. From his judicial temper, and the ascendency of his intellectual faculties over passion and interest, he was apparently cold in his nature, and impassive in view of all passing events, to such a degree that his humanity seemed to be based on a philosophy very much akin to that of Marcus Aurelius. His sympathies were keen, however, and many a distressed woman had cause for gratitude to him for interference with the stern processes of army discipline in time of war, much to the indignation of the civil or military martinets.

In regard to the change in his religious views, this fact is more questionable, but attested by all who knew him, and by most of his biographers. As a lawyer in Springfield his religious views, according to his partner and biographer Herndon, were extremely liberal, verging upon those advanced theories which Volney and Thomas Paine advocated, even upon atheism itself. As he grew older he became more discreet as to the expression of his religious opinions. Judge Davis, who knew him well, affirms that he had no faith, in the Christian sense, but only in laws, principles, cause and effect, — that is, he had no belief in a personal God. No religion seemed to find favor with him except that of a practical and rationalistic order. He never joined a church, and was sceptical of the divine origin of the Bible, still more of what is

called providential agency in this world. But when the tremendous responsibilities of his office began to press upon his mind, and the terrible calamities he deplored but could not avert stirred up his soul in anguish and sadness, then the recognition of the need of assistance higher than that of man, for the guidance of this great nation in its unparalleled trials, became apparent in all his utterances. When he said, "as God gives us to see the right," he meant, if he meant anything, that wisdom to act in trying circumstances is a gift, distinct from what is ordinarily learned from experience or study. This gift, we believe, he earnestly sought.

It must have been a profound satisfaction to Mr. Lincoln that he lived to see the total collapse of the rebellion, — the fall of Richmond, the surrender of Lee, and the flight of Jefferson Davis, — the complete triumph of the cause which it was intrusted to him to guard. How happy he must have been to see that the choice he made of a general-in-chief in the person of Ulysses Grant had brought the war to a successful close, whatever the sacrifices which this great general found it necessary to make to win ultimate success! What a wonder it is that Mr. Lincoln, surrounded with so many dangers and so many enemies, should have lived to see the completion of the work for which he was raised up! No life of ease or luxury

or exultation did he lead after he was inaugurated, — having not even time to visit the places where his earlier life was passed; for him there were no triumphal visits to New York and Boston, — no great ovations anywhere; his great office brought him only hard and unceasing toil, which taxed all his energies.

It was while seeking a momentary relaxation from his cares and duties, but a few weeks after his second inauguration, that he met his fate at the hands of the assassin, from peril of whose murderous designs no great actor on the scene of mortal strife and labor can be said to be free. All that a grateful and sorrowing nation could do was done in honor of his services and character. His remains were carried across the land to their last resting-place in Illinois, through our largest cities, with a funeral pageantry unexampled in the history of nations; and ever since, orators have exhausted language in their encomiums of his greatness and glory.

Some think that Lincoln died fortunately for his fame, — that had he lived he might have made mistakes, especially in the work of reconstruction, which would have seriously affected his claim as a great national benefactor.

On the other hand, had he lived he might have put the work of reconstruction on a basis which would have added to his great services to the country. The

South had no better friend than he, and he was incapable of animosity or revenge. Certain it is that this work of reconstruction requires even yet the greatest patriotism and a marvellous political wisdom. The time will come when the question cannot be evaded by statesmen, any more than could slavery itself when the issue was made up. The terrible fact that five millions of emancipated negroes are doomed to nearly as great injustice and wrong as when they were actually slaves will one day press on the conscience of the nation, and call for all its wisdom. The great question whether in their ignorance and degradation they shall enjoy the practical benefit of their right of suffrage, and the still greater problem as to their education, will have to be solved. Shall they be educated by private charities, or by funds provided by Congress? For educated, morally as well as intellectually, they must be, or the fairest portion of the country will be practically ruined.

These questions it was not given to Mr. Lincoln to consider. He died prematurely as a martyr. Nothing consecrates a human memory like martyrdom. Nothing so effectually ends all jealousies, animosities, and prejudices as the assassin's dagger. If Cæsar had not been assassinated it is doubtful if even he, the greatest man of all antiquity, could have bequeathed universal empire to his heirs. Lincoln's death unnerved the

strongest mind, and touched the heart of the nation with undissembled sadness and pity. From that time no one has dared to write anything derogatory to his greatness. That he was a very great man no one now questions.

It is impossible, however, for any one yet to place him in the historical place which, as an immortal benefactor he is destined to occupy. All speculation as to his comparative rank is worse than useless. Time effects wonderful changes in human opinions. There are some people in these days who affect to regard Washington as commonplace, as the lawyers of Edinburg at one time regarded Sir Walter Scott, because he made no effort to be brilliant in after-dinner speeches. There are others who, in the warmth of their innocent enthusiasm, think that Lincoln's fame will go on increasing until, in the whole Eastern world, among the mountains of Thibet, on the shores of China and Japan, among the jungles of India, in the wilds of darkest Africa, in the furthermost islands of the sea, his praises will be sung as second to no political benefactor that the world has seen. As all exaggerations provoke antagonism, it is wisest not to compare him with any national idols, but leave him to the undisputed verdict of the best judges, that he was one of the few immortals who will live in a nation's heart and the world's esteem from age to age. Is this not fame enough for a modest man, who felt his infe-

riority, in many respects, to those to whom he himself intrusted power?

Lincoln's character is difficult to read, from its many-sided aspects. He rarely revealed to the same person more than a single side. His individuality was marvellous. "Let us take him," in the words of his latest good biographer, "as simply Abraham Lincoln, singular and solitary as we all see that he was. Let us be thankful if we can make a niche big enough for him among the world's heroes without worrying ourselves about the proportion it may bear to other niches; and there let him remain forever, lonely, as in his strong lifetime, impressive, mysterious, unmeasured, and unsolved."

One thing may be confidently affirmed of this man, — that he stands as a notable exemplar, in the highest grade, of the American of this century, — the natural development of the self-reliant English stock upon our continent. Lowell, in his "Commemoration Ode," has set forth Lincoln's greatness and this fine representative quality of his, in words that may well conclude our study of the man and of the first full epoch of American life: —

"Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory

Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

AUTHORITIES.

The most voluminous of the Lives of Abraham Lincoln is that of Nicolay and Hay, which seems to be fair and candid without great exaggerations; but it is more a political and military history of the United States than a Life of Lincoln himself. Herndon's Life is probably the most satisfactory of the period before Lincoln's inauguration. Holland, Lamar, Stoddard, Arnold, and Morse have all written interesting biographies. See also Ford's History of Illinois, Greeley's American Conflict, Lincoln and Douglas Debates, Lincoln's Speeches, just published by the Century Co., Secretary Chase's Diary, Swinton's Army of the Potomac, Lives of Seward, McClellan, Garrison, and Grant, Grant's Autobiography, McClure's Lincoln and Men of War Times, Wilson's History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power.

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